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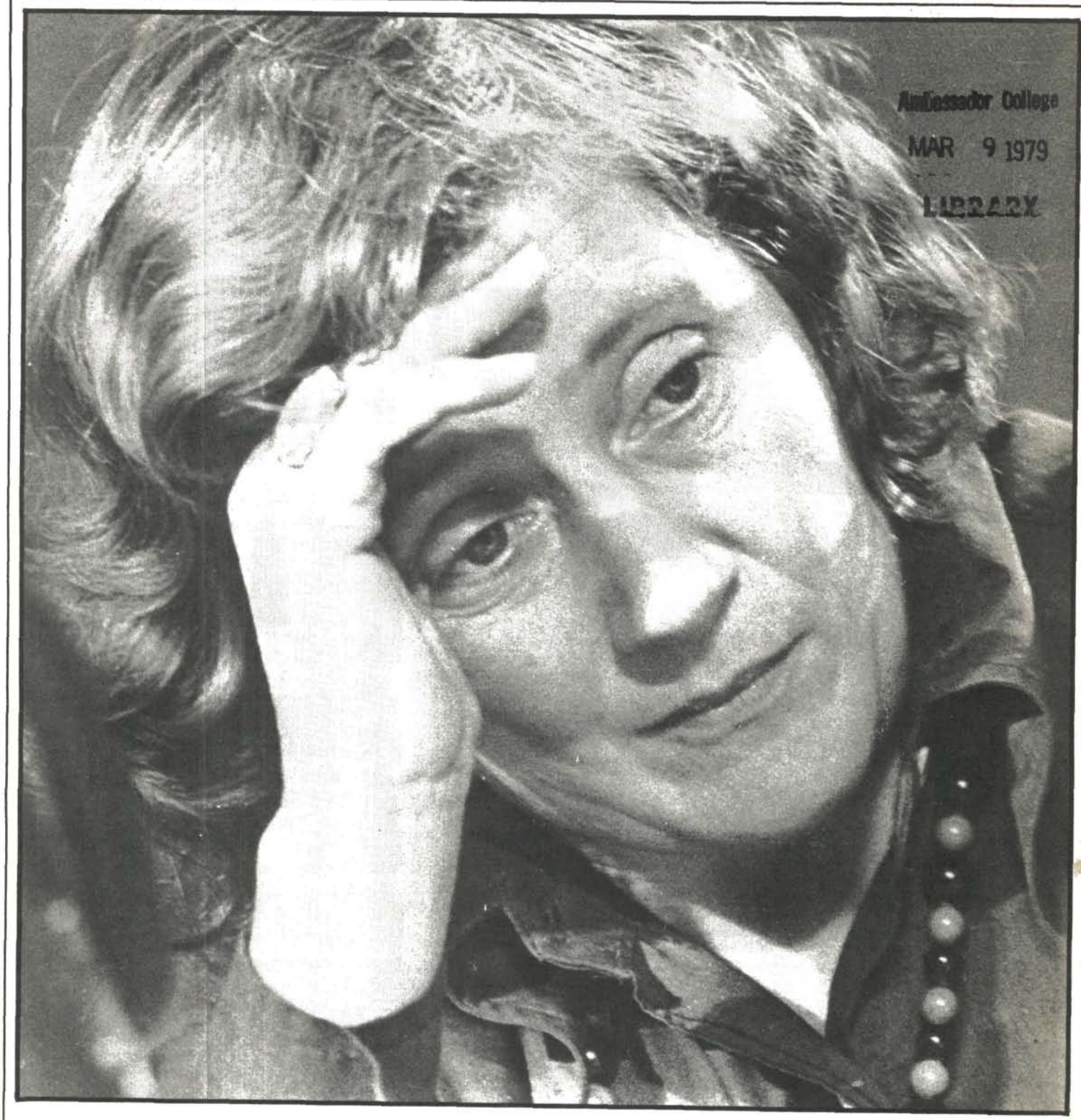

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Shirley Williams: the social democrat at bay

Inside Rhodesia/Co-op conspiracy: 2

Neil Ascherson: Socialist propaganda in the novel
Anthony Quinton: Lying/Russell Davies: Wrestling

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Profits and incomes policy

NATURALLY, the Government's attempts to rebuild its social contract will be greeted with glad scepticism by hangers-on of the status quo. Plainly, there is little chance of a swiftly-modified version of the present design achieving take-off speed; in which case the Cabinet (exhibiting, no doubt, signals of personal disapproval) will slide collectively into the monetarist Slough of Despond. To the City, a government which is Labour in appearance and Tory in economic substance is rather an attractive prospect (more so conceivably than having the real monetarists, who might spoil the whole joke by taking it far too solemnly). Therefore, the foam-flecked rhetoric of Right-wing publicists is not reflected in the practical behaviour of the financial markets. To this extent, Merlyn Rees is right to say that there is no immediate crisis for the nation.

The crisis is for the Labour Party, and it extends beyond the short-term. A substantial period of administration conducted on monetarist lines would erode, perhaps fatally, the coalition on which Labour's existence depends.

There is no magic way to build a new incomes policy, for it involves conducting day-to-day politics within the framework of a consistent determination to alter the nature of society: difficult anywhere, but especially difficult in Britain, where the technicians of government are animated, not so much by conservative principle, as by an unyieldingly conservative and atomistic practice. For all that, the attempt must be made, and the history of the social contract may be helpful in one respect. It may finally dispose of the central delusion of the Wilson-Callaghan years: that a party of the left can function on purely expedient lines, avoiding the difficult but productive tension between theory and practice.

The social contract principally failed because it did not challenge the received verities about profit, reward and industrial management. That is, it was implemented insofar as it involved increases (initially) in social spending, and measures like the Employment Protection Act or the introduction of ACAS. Some of the measures may have annoyed the traditional – and, let us remember, deeply unsuccessful – management structure of British industry. None touched the central ground: the 'right to manage' and the 'right to profit'. No doubt the Bullock Report erred in many of its proposals, but the feebleness of the Government's response to the entirely predictable fury of the boardrooms was such as to convince most unionists that the commitment had never been serious. Still more damaging, the Government made no real effort to involve company profits within the workings of its incomes policy. Tacitly, and sometimes explicitly, Labour ministers have accepted two crucial elements of the conservative argument: *first* that British industry staggers under a monstrous and worsening burden of taxation; and *second* that if it were not so, and profits were freed, there would be new vigour in the national economic life.

Professor Mervyn King (who is not, incidentally, a socialist) shot the first proposition to pieces last year with *The British Tax System*, in which he showed that the real rate of return on capital, after tax, had scarcely altered since the glorious Fifties when Tory freedom was last seen to 'work'. A majority of the top twenty companies, it emerged, pay no real corporation tax at all.

PROFIT, as an indicator of whether an economic organisation produces more value than its consumers, is by no sensible means a dirty word – whatever may be the difficulty of getting the accounting principles right. But profit as the source of new energy for a declining industrial society is something altogether more metaphysical, for all its appeal to the 'common sense' of Tory publicists.

Much recent British economic history may be written in terms of the anaesthesia of the Keynesian tradition, whose Whitehall practitioners emptied it of all radical content and turned it into a kind of stuffed owl of economics. One of Keynes's radical ideas which got chloroformed was that enterprise is not rationally motivated 'any more than an expedition to the North Pole'.

This does not mean that successful and enterprising businessmen are personally irrational in all their actions. It means that the rational expectation of profit is not what makes them try to develop new technologies. One can put this in terms of Sir Karl Popper's rule that the most interesting hypothesis is inevitably the least plausible, or in the blunter terms of a vastly successful businessman, Andrew Carnegie: 'Pioneerin' don't pay'. Rational profit-seeking avoids new and risky activities, which is why there are frequent celebrations in the business press of those captains of industry who allow others to immolate themselves in developing new ideas.

Labour has been reluctant to move against company profits – a reluctance which, to rank and file unionists, is perfect evidence of the vacuity of the social contract – because it more than half believes the boardroom argument that large, untaxed profits are necessary to stimulate innovation. But why should this be so? If larger profits can be reaped anyway, why should the profit-seeker pursue them through the long, difficult and risky route of industrial innovation? The sensible thing is to put everything into tried and true devices of enrichment. When the Tories under Heath did 'set the capitalists free', the result was a Gadarene rush into property-speculation and stock-exchange manipulation.

The logical contradiction between profit and enterprise need not be effective at all times and in all cultures. A business elite which has maintained much of its morale and high spirits, such as that of the United States, may go on playing the game of innovation with immense pleasure, despite the irrationality involved ('money', as some of them will tell you, 'is just the way we keep the score'). But an actual acquaintance with the existing personnel of British management does not suggest that they will become more adventurous if they are allowed to keep more of what they can acquire without risk.

It is not impossible that very startling increases in the freedom of profit might restore what Keynes called 'animal spirits' to the British capitalist class. But this would have to go so far that it would destroy the social fabric long before it could take effect. Sir Keith Joseph's fantasies in this direction are examined opposite.

Taxation, as it happens, is one of the few things about the future which can be made reasonably predictable. Therefore, a high rate of tax on profits can have the effect of decreasing the attraction of the highly-lucrative 'sure thing' when it competes for investment against the more adventurous but less predictable idea. There are, to put it mildly, many more complexities about industrial renewal and incomes policy than can be fitted into a single article. But there is a particular point being made here: that no incomes policy will work unless it deals with corporate profits. And Labour must rid itself of the idea that to redistribute income away from profits is not in reality an attack on the spirit of enterprise.

NOTES

More cuts ahead

Margaret Gibson writes: On the face of it the government's latest White Paper on its spending plans for the next four years presents a straightforward rolling on of the plans laid out in last year's White Paper. But, beneath the surface, there are hints that the disappointingly conservative plan for a two per cent annual growth in the volume of public spending may never materialise. And the White Paper gives, accidentally, a clear statement of the government's willingness to push up the number of unemployed in an attempt to curb inflation.

The major flaw in the White Paper (Cmnd 7439), published on Thursday, is that its assumptions about inflation are hopelessly over optimistic. Buried away on p. 153 for example, is the startling so-called 'working assumption' that real earnings (i.e. earnings after taking account of inflation) are expected to fall by 1½ per cent this financial year, 1978-79, and next. Leaving aside whether such a fall would be either economically wise or desirable, the breakdown of the 5 per cent policy has left this assumption high and dry.

Although it would be quite possible to stick to these spending plans even if inflation does take off again, it can safely be assumed that this will not happen. One can understand why if one examines the economic arguments which lie behind the three cases presented in the White Paper to illustrate the future of the economy until 1982. All three cases are based on unrealistically low earnings assumptions: Case A assumes a 7 per cent rise in the pay round followed by 5 per cent a year thereafter, Case B assumes constant 7 per cent earnings growth and Case C an average of 11 per cent a year. In Case C inflation returns to double figures and stays there. This results in slower growth, and less employment than in the other two cases. In real life this would be at least partly because of the government's response, which will be to deflate the economy by fiscal as well as by monetary measures.

Although all three cases are supposed to be consistent with the White Paper spending plans, (but as inflation affects the relative prices of different public spending in the economy this is in fact impossible), it is likely that public spending cuts will form part of any deflationary package. In any event,

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if inflation is greater than predicted, it will put serious pressure on the cash limit system in 1979-80. The cash limits to be published in the Spring are intended to be based on the figures in the White Paper. Changes in them to take account of higher public sector wages will need Parliamentary approval. The government may prefer to stick to its cash plans, which would mean less spending in real terms. The best economic growth it now assumes – 3 per cent a year – is less than the 3½ per cent which last year's White Paper described as disappointing.

Juries under attack

Duncan Campbell writes: The latest onslaught against the jury system, this time from the Association of Chief Police Officers, aptly coincides with a new publication on the history of the battles over the jury. In their evidence to the Royal Commission on Criminal Procedure published last week, ACPO propose that wholesale jury 'vetting' should become the norm – involving criminal record, local intelligence and Special Branch checks. Jurors should be obliged to supply details of their date and place of birth. Failing this, ACPO ask for a further reduction in the number of jurors required to agree on a majority verdict (at present ten).

The National Council for Civil Liberties has just published a review of the jury system prompted by the vetting and rigging allegations during the recent Official Secrets case. The authors, Harriet Harman and John Griffith, have established that vetting practices first appeared when so-called 'special juries', loyal to the Crown, were abolished in 1948. More recent democratisation of juries, by qualifying almost anyone entitled to vote, has been compromised by other adjustments, such as the removal of details of occupation from lists, reduction of the number of defence 'challenges', and of course by secret vetting procedures. In addition, many people accused of middle grade offences have been deprived altogether of the right of jury trial. If the ACPO proposals were ever accepted (an unlikely event), they would polish off any vestigial idea of the jury as an impartial and popular arbiter of the facts of a case.

As Harman and Griffith point out, civil liberties have been defended in the past by juries disregarding, at the right moments, the letter of oppressive or unpopular law. Tourists who come to the Old Bailey are sold a lavish pamphlet which emphasises the rights and traditions of juries and recalls the famous case of 1670, when a jury acquitted the Quakers Penn and Mead, despite bullying and threats from the judge, who wanted a guilty verdict. Those who come to the Bailey as prospective jurors today are given quite different information. No lavish pamphlet for them, no reminder of their glorious tradition, but stern advice on a duplicated sheet: 'The judge's directions on the law . . . must be obeyed'.

Company facts revealed

Rob Rohrer writes: The Department of Trade seems to be doing its utmost to frustrate public access to companies' financial records held in London and Cardiff. Companies House, run by the Department, is refusing to continue a highly successful experiment operated last year in conjunction with Liverpool Libraries offering a cheap, efficient company search service to members of the public. In 1975 the DoT stopped their postal search service as an 'economy measure' and in 1976 there was even an attempt, unsuccessful, to close the London Companies House when the new Cardiff HQ was launched. However, last year, Companies House relented enough to co-operate with Liverpool Libraries in running an experimental postal service and for six months Merseysiders could carry out a company search for a mere 30p a time.

The scheme worked well: a group of Courtaulds' shop stewards, for instance, armed themselves with the fine detail of their company's performance, helping them to outmanoeuvre local management and win a hefty pay rise. Other provincial libraries want to follow suit but Companies House has declined to extend the service. The reason – coinciding with a £3 million surplus on Companies House operations – is that it would overstretch resources: recently there has been an increase in enquiries at London, which handles 10,000 searches a day, and at Cardiff, which handles 1,000. The Liverpool experiment generated only ten enquiries a day – it was a condition laid down by Companies House that the service was not advertised beyond library walls. Companies House say their staffing ceiling prevents them taking on more people.

Last week Companies House, Cardiff, was advising telephone callers to consult Yellow Pages for a professional search agency. In Liverpool there are two; one of them – Jordans – charges £10.10 plus VAT per company search. Jordans have another profitable sideline: Companies House records are on film and while microfiche negatives produced from the original are *given away* to anyone visiting Companies House and paying the 5p search fee, Jordans charge £3.00 simply to forward the microfiche to a customer (another local Liverpool firm wanted £7) – an exorbitantly handsome mark-up, some would say. Jordans call it a 'nuisance fee'. Whatever this profitable re-sale of public information is called, the Department of Trade clearly has no interest in ensuring that the public's right to know is cheaply and easily met.

Palestinians silenced

Ian Black writes from Jerusalem: While members of the Palestine National Council meet in Damascus to

FREE SPEECH

The economics of Sir Fu Manchu

It has been suggested that people should take an essentially *laissez-faire* attitude to Sir Keith Joseph. Let him rant about Adam Smith and Hayek, pressing a sweaty palm to his brow in remembrance of past errors of his own. Let him wallow in his own, essentially private barminess.

It has perhaps gone a little far for this approach, though, when a man who *may* become Chancellor of the Exchequer can say, in an interview with the American business magazine *Forbes* that

> It is remarkable that despite such vivid evidence of failure the collectivist idea is still surviving, let alone strong. There are, of course, islands of (free enterprise) encouragement around the world — Singapore, Hong Kong, Korea. You'd think the contrast between what's happening there and elsewhere would have some effect.

You might indeed, Sir Keith. Let's start with South Korea, the great sweat-shop. One inqury showed that in Peace Market, Seoul – the centre of the textile industry – some of the 27,000 workers might go for three days without sleep. Owners provided injections to keep them awake.

Those who object to this, and to a seven-day working week, are fired. Holidays and safety rules are both non-existent. A woman bus conductor last year told War on Want:

> We work from five in the morning to one or two o'clock at night. Then we return to the dormitory and sleep one or two hours. I am awakened by the head of the dormitory before four o'clock and leave for work . . . I fall asleep standing in the galloping bus.

As for Hong Kong: Sir Keith may have forgotten the 1971 census, which showed that nearly 36,000 children between the ages of 10 and 14 were at work, principally in textile factories, construction and mining. There will be another census in 1981: meanwhile, evidence from the Anti-Slavery Society and a famous *World in Action* inquiry have suggested that there is still a horrendous amount of child labour in the colony. Children are put to work because their parents desperately need the money, and because schooling is neither free nor compulsory for those over 12.

One notable account of Hong Kong comes from Henry Keswick, who was worth £20 million by the end of his stint as chairman of Jardine Matheson (after which he retired to buy the *Spectator* and look for a Tory seat). Hong Kong's great strength, he said, was that it was

> crude capitalism at work. Nowhere else in the world will labour take a cut in wages without creating.

Workers in his own factories were forced to take wage cuts of between 20 and 30 per cent. Does Sir Keith really propose this as a model for British industry?

Singapore, his third 'island of encouragement' is perhaps the most curious choice, in that it is run by a man who calls himself a social democrat. But titles (except his own) don't matter to Sir Keith: what counts is the smack of firm government, which Lee Kuan Yew certainly deploys. Even our own Jim Slater has declared that one cannot expect to receive justice in the Singapore courts – something which quarrels slightly with the Josephite argument that free markets and human dignity are indissolubly linked.

Lee has in the past two years detained correspondents for such subversive journals as the *Financial Times,* the *Economist* and the *Far East Economic Review* – keeping them in the slammer until they were ready to admit to being red agents. Under Section 8 of the Internal Security Act a policeman can, without warrant, detain without trial any person who is likely to act in a manner prejudicial to the security of Singapore. Trial by jury was abolished for capital offences in 1969, having been abolished ten years earlier for all others. Newspapers critical of the government – the *Singapore Herald* and the *Eastern Sun* – have been closed down.

Just how serious Sir Keith ever is may be open to question. What is pretty certain is that in a country like Britain, which has slightly stronger traditions of individual liberty than Sir Keith's utopias, any attempt to apply 'encouragement' to the working class along such lines would be a flawless recipe for revolution.

Francis Wheen

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discuss the future strategy of the PLO in the post-Camp David era, the Israeli military authorities earlier this week prevented Palestinian students on the West Bank from participating in a press conference called to publicise political arrests and restraints on freedom of expression in the occupied territories.

The students, from Bir Zeit University near Ramallah, in the heart of the West Bank, are perhaps the most articulate and well-organised body of young Palestinians in the occupied territories. The vast majority of the 1,100 students are staunch supporters of the PLO, with only a tiny handful favouring a return to Jordanian rule.

Monday's press conference was called by the Committee for a Just Peace between Israel and the Arabs and it went ahead without the Bir Zeit students and teachers. Lawyer Felicia Langer, who is a member of the Central Committee of the Israel communist Party (Rakah) – and whose name, thanks to her defence of Palestinians in military courts, has almost demonological associations for most Israelis – accused security forces of beating up and humiliating Bir Zeit students. Other speakers at the press conference displayed a notice in Arabic and English, that had been put up at the university the previous evening by the Rector. He explained that the military governor of Ramallah had told him that a 'Rakah' press conference was to be held in Jerusalem the next day and that Bir Zeit students and teachers would not be permitted to attend. 'Severe legal action' would be taken against those who disobeyed the order.

The military government says that a number of students are being investigated for 'security offences' but it denies Langer's claim that any violence has been used against them. It says that the prohibition on attendance at the press conference was 'of a political nature' and refused to comment on it.

If an autonomous Palestinian state is ever created on the West Bank the students of Bir Zeit will find themselves in key positions. A plaque bearing the following inscription from George Bernard Shaw's *John Bull's Other Island* hangs in the office of the Dean of the Arts Faculty at the university:

> If you destroy a people's nationhood – it will know no other thought but its reconquest. It will listen to no moderator, hear no philosopher, lend an ear to no preacher so long as its national demand is not answered. No problem – not even the most vital – will win its attention except the matter of its unity and national liberation.

Israelis, who understand that there can be no peace in the Middle East without a solution of the Palestinian problem, would do well to bear this piece of Shavian wisdom in mind.

Racism's latest victim

Francis Wheen writes: This Saturday East London's black community will bury Michael Ferreira, a 19-year-old Guyanese boy who, in the early hours of 11 December, became the area's fourth victim of a racist murder in eight months. Local Community Relations Councils, black people's defence committees, trades councils and other organisations have declared Saturday a day of mourning, and a large number of the area's black population is expected to process to the cemetery in mute protest at the state of siege in which many of them are forced to live.

The only encouraging aspect of the Ferreira case is the behaviour of the usually hesitant police, who detained three white youths within hours and charged them the same afternoon. Police officers have also, against all tradition, been prepared to admit that the motives for the murder were racial. The committal hearing for the three people charged in connection with the attack starts at Highbury magistrates' court this Friday.

'It's difficult to convey to people outside the area the effect this has had on the community,' said a worker from Hackney Community Relations Council. 'People are even more angry, frightened and confused than they were already. What can they do? Almost all black people now realise that they must organise to defend themselves if they don't want to end up like Michael.'

Reopening the cages

Paul Gordon writes: For the first time in six years a man has been allocated to the notorious segration unit at Inverness Prison – commonly known as the 'cages'. David Mather, who seriously assaulted a prison officer while serving a sentence for housebreaking, was transferred to Inverness shortly before Christmas, following an order by the Secretary of State for Scotland, Bruce Millan.

The cages – of which there are five – ensure the total isolation of the prisoner from everyone except the officer who passes in food. They were first used in 1971, but were discontinued two years later when they became the direct cause of the worst prison violence Scotland had ever seen. Since then, the cages have been maintained in prime condition and only recently a concrete bollard was added to each, as a seat. They have been condemned for their barbarism from a number of sources, including former inmate Jimmy Boyle, in his autobiography *A Sense of Freedom*. They were condemned almost unanimously by the Scottish press when they were opened for inspection last November. And it has been pointed out that they may well contravene Article 3 of the European Convention of Human Rights, which forbids torture or 'inhuman or degrading treatment'.

In February 1978 it became known that the authorities were planning to use the cages again. However, these plans were shelved as a result of considerable opposition from the public. The cages then became the central issue in a dispute with the Scottish Prison Officers Association, who wanted them reopened. The official reason given by the SPOA was that its members needed better protection from violent prisoners. But in fact, there had been no increase in the number of assaults on prison officers. So was there another reason?

By the time the plans to reopen the cages were abandoned, the extra officers needed to guard them had already been drafted into Inverness Prison. This meant considerable over-staffing and a consequent loss of overtime, sorely felt by officers who were in dispute for higher pay. Opening the cages was an obvious way of solving the problem, since eight officers are needed to guard a single prisoner around the clock.

Mather, the new inmate, is a particularly sad choice. He has a long history of convictions, was regarded as too unstable for the therapeutic unit at Barlinnie Prison where he spent several months slashed his wrists before his last release from prison, and attempted to swallow the razor blade with which he had attacked his most recent victim. Instead of the intensive psychiatric care recommended by psychiatrists at Barlinnie, Mather will spend up to three months in a cell-within-a-cell, measuring seven metres square and fronted by metal bars. Those who have known him estimate that it is more likely to cause than to prevent violent behaviour in future.

A raspberry for Rees-Mogg

Patrick Wintour writes: There is still no sign of any break in the deadlock at Times Newspapers. Neither Natsopa nor the NGA are prepared to talk to the management until their members are reinstated and in the case of the NGA until the suspension of publication is lifted. The management had hoped that the cost of the strike to the print unions would flush them out, as NGA members are receiving £40 a week strike pay. The financial dynamics may rebound on the management if the unions win their claims at an industrial tribunal for redundancy money.

Equally disturbing must be the circulation figures published this week in the *UK Press Gazette* which show that the weekly sales of the *Observer* and *Sunday Telegraph* have picked up by about 650,000 – just under half the sale of the *Sunday Times* before the closure. Surprisingly, the *Guardian* and the *Daily Telegraph* seemed to have picked up less than 100,000 of *The Times*'s 290,000 daily sale.

This seems to suggest that *The Times* is more indispensable to the nation than the profitable *Sunday Times*. This will be cheering news to *Times* editor William Rees-Mogg who is in bad odour with his managerial colleagues judging by a memorandum from manager Peter Roberts to Harold Evans, the *Sunday Times* editor. The memo says that it is not a good idea for management to talk to the *Sunday Times* NUJ chapel because of the very sharp decline in the chapel's view of management caused by Rees-Mogg's 'betrayal'. (This is a reference to Rees-Mogg's promise to *The Times* NUJ that they could have parity of payment with the *Sunday Times* journalists; the *Sunday Times* NUJ had been convinced by management that if they settled early they would not suffer relatively thereby.) The memorandum continues:

> It really is impossible to underestimate the damage the betrayal caused . . . the credibility of the management currently is zero. Any director talking to the chapel just now would have an extremely rough time. It would be acutely embarrassing and I believe should be avoided. I have a very uneasy feeling that the Editor of *The Times* will agree to some parity payment before the next annual salary negotiations [the date had not been specified in the previous negotiations]. Rees-Mogg has all along been determined to go his own way on this matter.

LITERARY EDITOR

Later this year, the New Statesman will lose its literary editor, Martin Amis, who wishes to do more writing (for the NS, apart from any others). People interested in this post of honour and modest remuneration should write to the Editor, 10 Great Turnstile, London WC1.

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WORKERS' CO-OPS

Civil servants undermine Meriden

Christopher Hird and Patrick Wintour write: Civil Servants at the Department of Industry were accused this week of attempting to close down the Meriden co-operative as part of a secret deal with the Japanese motorcycle manufacturers Kawasaki to bring their manufacturing operations to Britain. This deal would have involved as a British partner Mr David Brown, a board member of the state owned NEB: northern regional branch. Furthermore there is evidence that the sale of Meriden was discussed with senior Kawasaki representatives in Japan in July by John Williams, of the NEB, even though the NEB deny any involvement in Meriden. Until Brian Sedgemore's powerful speech in the House of Commons during Monday's debate on the civil service, the Meriden co-operative had no idea that this deal was being arranged. Mr Geoffrey Robinson, chief executive of the co-op and a Labour MP himself, is dismayed that he was not informed of the deal by Alan Williams the Industry Minister.

First contact with Kawasaki was made in April 1978, when senior executives from the company visited the north-east as guests of the North East Development Council. From a meeting with Mr David Brown, the founder and owner of DJB Engineering – a successful maker of heavy earth moving equipment, emerged the idea of Kawasaki setting up a UK manufacturing operation. Brown, as a member of its Northern Regional Board, took the idea to the NEB; because Kawasaki were nervous of dealing with a government organisation, he continued to handle the talks.

Brown told the Department of Industry about his talks – a standard procedure when there is the possibility of a major investment by an overseas company – and mentioned to the DoI that Meriden would have to be told about the negotiations when there was a firm proposal.

At the end of July, the Industry Minister Alan Williams was in Newcastle and met Brown – with NEB deputy-chairman Mr Richard Morris – to be brought up to date. All were aware of the political problems of the government backing a big Japanese motor bike factory to compete with a workers' co-op, and the possibility of giving Meriden some sub-contract work was discussed. It is unclear whether Williams at this stage was aware that some of his officials were eager to shut down Meriden and sell the trade names to Kawasaki. Brown dismisses this story as ludicrous and says he knows nothing about such a plan; however we have evidence that it did exist.

In the autumn Brown was in Japan on business and met up with Mr John Williams, who works at the NEB, looking after British Leyland. The two men visited Kawasaki and Williams went back to the DoI with a proposal for a joint venture between the NEB, Kawasaki and Brown. A factory would be built on a green-field site in the north-east to assemble 100,000 bikes a year for sale in Europe and North Africa. There would be work for about 1,000 people but it seemed likely that many of the parts would have to be imported: in the end there would be a net loss of skilled engineering jobs. The total cost would be £20m. – to which the government would be expected to contribute under the Industry Act and in regional grants.

A curious aspect of the proposal was that Brown, an NEB board member, would be the principal UK partner, with the NEB giving a helping hand. The Japanese were anxious for a UK partner and wanted someone with local expertise to help them set up the factory. Mr Brown says that the NEB hoped to interest other substantial partners in the venture once the scheme was well advanced, so that his eventual share would be very small.

Following the report from Williams, DoI civil servants were under the impression that Kawasaki were very interested in the Triumph trade marks and might be willing to buy out the co-op. This fitted in with ideas of those in charge of the motor cycle branch of the motor vehicles division of the ministry. The head of the branch, a Mr Suich, envisaged that the NEB-backed Kawasaki/Brown company would buy out the co-op, giving the workers a cash lump-sum to ensure their agreement to the factory closure.

Suich realised the political risks of the deal: cash handouts to the members of a loss-making co-op which had been financed by taxpayers money could cause problems. But he took the view that to give Meriden more financial aid might frighten off Kawasaki, while allowing Meriden to go bust might make it hard to justify giving support to a new Japanese company.

It is not clear for how long Industry Minister Williams knew about the idea of closing Meriden or whether he ever agreed with it. But it is remarkable that the civil servant with the greatest responsibility for the British motorcycle industry should display such cynicism towards the workers' belief in the co-op and encourage a deal – at great expense to the government – which would hand the remains of the British motorcycle industry over to a foreign competitor. It is even more remarkable if one imagines the political uproar which would follow the discovery that the civil service were proposing to hawk around to any interested foreigner a conventional capitalist company to which the government had given financial assistance. Further, at the time Meriden were making a trading profit – though its working capital resources were tight and it needed a scheme to cope with £4.2m. worth of government loans which it is due to start repaying this year. Finally, in December the Department asked Geoffrey Robinson, Labour MP and one-time boss of Jaguar cars, to become managing director of Meriden, but they told him nothing about the Kawasaki scheme. Industry Minister Williams now says that the scheme has been dropped and, it seems, the negotiations between the NEB and Kawasaki have been going very slowly.

The appeal of the plan to the NEB and the DoI was that it provided the most politically acceptable way of closing down Meriden and handing the British motorcycle industry to Kawasaki. The least the Government should ask itself is why the NEB does not wish to make Meriden the nucleus of a motor bike industry and why civil servants advance secretly and repeatedly policies which undermine co-operatives.

Pressure is mounting in Parliament – especially from the Conservatives – for a debate on Rhodesia. When it takes place it will probably focus on the culpability of the government in selling out Rhodesian whites to the murdering terrorists of Robert Mugabe. Is Mugabe really just an outsider in the race for power, an extremist unsupported by the majority of blacks? PETER TAYLOR visited Rhodesia this month. He reports from Salisbury and from villages near the Mozambique border that support for Muzorewa and the transitional government is fading fast, as Mugabe's guerrillas are recognised as the only forces fighting for a free Zimbabwe. CHRIS MULLIN examines the incorrigible bias of the British media – a bias which is clearly linked to financial interests. CHARLES MEDAWAR reports on an oil company's auditors, who failed to notice that their client was involved in sanctions busting.

RHODESIA 1
Peter Taylor

Whites live in hope while support for the guerrillas grows

Waiting for a miracle

I FIRST MET HIM two years ago: a proud Rhodesian warhorse with a leather face. He'd shown me the great bullock cart on which six oxen had borne his family eastwards across Rhodesia nearly sixty years ago. He'd said he would burn his farm rather than leave it. When I asked him about Zimbabwe, he scornfully dismissed it as a pile of ruins on the tourist trail south of Fort Victoria.

By coincidence, I met him again this month at a dusty airstrip in the middle of nowhere, the fringe of an operational area. He came striding across the runway, less surprised to see me than I was him, clad as always in green fatigues with his pilot's wings on the shirtsleeves: he'd flown for Britain in World War Two. We stood under the wing of his plane to escape the sun. He looked older and sadder, said he'd left his farm and moved into Salisbury: the war was too close. I didn't ask him about Zimbabwe but it was clear his views were the same. He still referred to the Africans as having 'their thumbs in their bums and their minds in neutral'.

White Rhodesia hasn't changed. Despite the political currents, most of the quarter of a million whites who are left retain depressingly familiar attitudes towards the country's six million blacks. The only novelty is an extra term of abuse imported by Vietnam veterans who have come to fight as mercenaries for the Rhodesian army. Blacks are now 'gooks' as well as 'kaffirs', 'ters' and less printable epithets. Whites still tell you they understand the African and know how to handle him: they blame his lack of progress on his own stupidity, not their refusal to provide him with the same educational opportunities as their children. The only contact most of them have with the blacks who will inherit Zimbabwe is with the servants who live in the huts at the bottom of their gardens. They still call them 'boy' and are still called 'boss'.

I watched a sweet old lady in a straw hat turn fierce as she shooed away a group of black youths as if they had been animals straying into her garden. They had innocently been watching a bowls match. Oblivious in the sun, the white-clad players bowled on over greens as neatly pressed as their trousers and skirts, as though time had stood still.

FEW SHOULD BE SURPRISED that only 20 per cent of blacks between the ages of 18 and 25 now conscripted for military service have reported for duty; nor is it remarkable that thousands have left the townships and the Tribal Trust Lands, where jobs are few and prospects grim, to join the guerrillas across the border. A 19-year-old black from a Salisbury

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township told me he'd joined the guerrillas when he'd decided that whites weren't interested in treating blacks as equals; he resented being called a 'kaffir' and being told by whites that their dogs were better than he.

In fact, when I met him he was wearing a Rhodesian army uniform, not guerrilla denims. He was one of the much-publicised though seldom-seen 'returned guerrillas' who, according to the transitional government, are now coming out of the bush in their hundreds, hands in the air, eager to serve the new government they at last recognise as the true midwife of Zimbabwe, and confident that the terrorists are now fighting the losing battle.

However, if the story of this defector is to be believed, nothing could be further from the truth. He said he'd been captured and changed sides only after seven months of torture at the hands of the Special Branch. He was then given the choice of execution, life imprisonment or serving the Rhodesian government. He chose the latter. He told me that in his experience blacks joined the army to fight for money, not Rhodesia; their loyalties were often in question and some even paid subscriptions to Mugabe's men when they returned on leave to their townships.

ANY CREDIBILITY Smith's black partners had is fast ebbing away. Umtali, near the Mozambique border, where I spent New Year, was once the foundation of Bishop Muzorewa's support. Old Umtali is his birthplace, the Manyika tribesmen his brothers. Now the glue on the political party he pieced together from the splinters of nationalist politics is coming unstuck. His supporters see few promises fulfilled: there's no end to the war, discrimination continues and independence has been postponed. There were reports that on a recent visit to Inyanga, a few miles north of Umtali, he'd brought busloads of supporters from Salisbury to save the embarrassment of a poorly attended meeting. In the townships he once dominated, people talk of being let down by the Bishop and contrast his vacillations in Salisbury with the determiation of the men they describe as their 'comrades' in the bush.

In the Tribal Trust Lands, when no government men are around, Africans are frank, less guarded than in the townships where every word can be carried to the Special Branch and its bearer rewarded for his trouble. Here, the sentiments are the same: we support the guerrillas because they are our children; they are the ones fighting for Zimbabwe, their battle is our battle, the transitional government has done nothing for us. All this they say with no terrorist guns at their heads, as the government would have the rest of the world believe. For Africans in these border areas it is only a slight adjustment to shift allegiance from Muzorewa to Mugabe, from one Shona leader to another, from a loser to a potential winner.

So the picture that emerges out in the bush bears little resemblance to that painted by the authorities in Salisbury — of thousands of Africans intimidated by the terrorists, running to the government for protection, asking to be locked up in protected villages safe from the terrorists' threats. With press and television heavily censored, and the spreading of 'alarm and despondency' a punishable offence, white Rhodesians of whatever political persuasion are scarcely given a glimpse of what is happening outside their laagers. Lone voices that seep through the blanket of silence are either muffled by threats of imprisonment or dismissed by the government-controlled media as agents of Moscow. Ears are closely attuned to the words you use to describe the enemy: 'terrorists' will buy you beers; 'guerrillas' will buy you trouble.

ZANLA Forces *Photo: ZANU*

Public enemy number one is the Catholic church, which the government accuses of supporting the guerrillas under the cloak of ostensible neutrality, as an insurance policy to buy its future in the new Zimbabwe. In the absence of an effective opposition and a free press, missionaries and the Red Cross, whom the authorities regard as equally suspect, are rare sources of even rarer information about the conduct of the war.

RETURNING FROM THEIR STATIONS deep in the bush, missionaries tell stories that would be treasonable if overheard in Salisbury. They report almost 100 per cent support for the guerrillas and admit they have evolved a *modus vivendi* with them. (Some guerrillas may well have been taught in the missions to which they now return.) A new unit in the area will write in advance, often in 'very good English', setting out its requirements for its stay. The mission in turn sets out its parameters of operation: political meetings must not be held on the premises or slogans chanted within the precincts of the mission. Sometimes the commander of the unit will pay a personal visit to discuss with the priest any problems that arise. They ask for, and often get, food and medical supplies. Missionaries know they run the risk of death, imprisonment or deportation for 'aiding and abetting the terrorists'. They know that not all units are disciplined; that among them are those responsible for the murder of some thirty of their colleagues, as well as for appalling atrocities against the African population. But the priests I spoke to insisted that atrocities by the security forces far outweighed those by the guerrillas, so that even uncommitted Africans viewed the soldiers as their main enemy.

Under the Terrorism and Public Order Act, no action is taken against a soldier for torturing or killing a civilian provided he believed he acted with the security of the state in mind. Martial law, under which nearly 75 per cent of the country is now governed, gives the security forces *carte blanche*. A single sheet of blue paper, issued (curiously) by the Ministry of Information and Tourism and dated December 1978, sets out the terms. Written on one side in English and on the other in native tongues, it warns:

The 'returned refugee' who was captured and tortured by the Rhodesian security services *Photo: Thames TV*

> In martial law areas, the security forces can make their own laws to help them find and kill terrorists. They will not have to follow the ordinary laws, because that can take too much time. . . .Those people who help the terrorists will find lots of trouble. . . .Here are some of the things the army can do in martial law areas:
> 1. They can arrest and detain people.
> 2. They can confiscate or destroy property such as huts and cattle.
> 3. They can make people work for them.
>
> The security forces can now hold their own courts. These courts will have power to sentence people to gaol and death.

In a climate such as this, it is not surprising that in May last year at Gutu, over 60 Africans were reported (by the Catholic Institute for International Relations) to have been killed 'in crossfire'. In June at Domboshawa, 19 civilians were killed in a contact between security forces and guerrillas. In August at Nyamaropa, 20 Africans died after an air attack. There is no way of telling how these deaths were listed. According to the 1978 death toll just published, there were 301 'killed in crossfire', while 607 were killed as 'collaborators', 56 as 'curfew breakers', 136 as 'recruits' and 31 as 'stock thieves and looters'. As Chris Mullin points out opposite these statistics present the other face of the war, which Ian Smith and his friends abroad have successfully concealed from the world.

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RHODESIA 2
Chris Mullin

Laundered news from our 'kith and kin'

The war Smith is winning

TWO OUTSTANDING FEATURES of the war in Rhodesia may not be immediately obvious to those who rely on British newspapers and television for their information on the subject. The first is that the Rhodesian security forces have killed about seven times as many unarmed African civilians as the total number of white civilians said to have been killed by guerrillas. Secondly, nearly as many Africans have fled Rhodesia since the beginning of the war as the number of Cambodians to have fled their country during the rule of the Khmer Rouge.

According to the Smith regime's own figures, 1,553 unarmed African civilians have been killed by the Rhodesian security forces in the six years up to July 1978. By contrast a total of 207 white civilians were killed over the same period, many of them missionaries and farmers said to have been murdered by guerrillas – or 'terrorists', as most of our media prefer to describe those engaged in armed struggle against the illegal regime.

In spite of this, British media coverage has concentrated overwhelmingly on the deaths of white civilians. The murder of 12 Elim Pentecostal missionaries, for example, was the lead story in every daily paper on Monday 26 June last year. The *Daily Mail* devoted four pages and an editorial; the *Express* and the *Mirror* two pages each; the *Sun* one and a half pages. Some of the editorials were particularly outspoken: 'The terrorists are brutalised savages; the men who lead them are criminals with whom no civilised statesman, white or black, should contemplate dealing', screamed the *Express*.

By contrast, the deaths of about 100 African civilians at the hands of the Rhodesian security forces one month earlier stimulated no comparable sense of outrage. The *Express* devoted precisely one sentence, on 17 May, to what was the biggest civilian atrocity of the war. The *Mail* too only managed a single sentence at the time, followed by another one-sentence report on 23 May announcing that the death toll now appeared to be 105 and not 52 as stated earlier. The story was reported in some detail in the *Telegraph, Guardian* and *The Times* – although with nothing like the prominence later accorded to the 12 murdered missionaries. Nothing at all appeared in either the *Sun* or the *Mirror*.

It cannot be too strongly stressed that the figures for the number of African civilians killed by their own troops are the Rhodesian regime's own estimates. These do not take into account the 1,600 people (all said to be guerrillas despite clear evidence to the contrary) killed on Rhodesian raids into Mozambique; nor of course do they include the 1,500 the Rhodesian security forces claim to have killed on their recent raids into Zambia. It is also without challenging the 4,963 'terrorists' the Rhodesians claimed to have killed up to July inside Rhodesia; and it is without questioning the official claim that a further 1,712 black civilians were murdered by terrorists.

Then we come to the question of refugees. According to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees, as of September 1978 there were about 70,000 Rhodesian refugees in UN camps in Mozambique, 12,000 in Botswana and 35,000 in Zambia, making a total of 117,000. To these would have to be added perhaps another 25,000 who are not in refugee camps but who are being trained or are fighting as guerrillas. This would give a grand total of perhaps 140,000 Africans, out of a population of 5.9 million, who have fled Mr Smith's Rhodesia.

For Cambodia, figures from the UN High Commissioner for Refugees show that before the fall of the Khmer Rouge there were some 20,000 Cambodians in refugee camps in Thailand; about 170,000 more were living in Vietnam (not including ethnic Vietnamese and Chinese evicted shortly after the regime took over). A further 2,000 Cambodian Moslems had resettled in Malaysia and several thousand Cambodians had gone to live in the United States and France. In all, there were around 200,000 refugees out of a total population of more than seven million. Cohorts of distinguished journalists, with varying degrees of scholarship, combed the refugee camps on the borders of Cambodia, trying to piece together a picture of life under the tyranny of the Khmer Rouge. By comparison, little or no attempt has been made by the British press to find out what it is about life for an African in Rhodesia that has caused evacuation on such a scale.

We are, for example, indebted to the French Magazine, *Le Nouvel Observateur*, which recently ran an interview with a French mercenary who said he had served with a 60-man all-French unit in north-east Rhodesia until he became disillusioned.

> *Question:* It is said that the Selous Scouts at times make especially horrible terrorist raids inside Rhodesia – raids which are afterwards attributed to guerrillas.
> *Answer:* This is true. I know cases in which the Selous Scouts disguised themselves as Mozambique soldiers or as guerillas, to attack villagers, travellers, or to kill church leaders, for example. This is one of the Rhodesian specialities. They are very strong on psychological warfare and feel one of their jobs is to discredit the terrorists in the eyes of the civilian population.

Then there was the case of the American photographer, J. Ross Baughman. Mr Baughman, who is employed by Associated Press, dressed himself up as a soldier and accompanied a detachment of Grey's Scouts on a three-day mission in November 1977. Baughman recounted how he saw one man tortured to death, the man's wife and daughter whipped and then the wife tied on to a bed the metal springs of which had been heated over a fire. Baughman also said he saw huts burned down and prisoners with ropes round their necks forced to run or be dragged behind horses.

One of the problems is that, at least until recently, reporting of the war has been concentrated in very few hands. As I revealed in the NEW STATESMAN eighteen months ago, the BBC, the *Daily Telegraph, Daily Mail* and the *Guardian* had all been using the same correspondent – a Rhodesian freelance named Ian Mills who was operating under three different pseudonyms. At one time or another, Mr Mills has also acted as a stringer for Reuters, United Press International, Agence France Presse and *Newsweek*. This was believed to be a world record. Since his cover was blown, things have improved slightly: The *Guardian* now use Mills under his real name and the *Telegraph* now have a full-time correspondent of their own.

Television and radio are nearly as bad when it comes to reporting what is going on in Rhodesia and what's more they seem to feel they have something to hide. Last October the television programme *Look Here* discussed the way the British media reported southern Africa. Before the programme went out researchers contacted both BBC and ITV news asking to be allowed to use excerpts from newsreel film. Both refused to cooper-

THE ORPHANS
Out of two hapf
families—only t
children still al
CHOSEN TO DIE FOR GOD
As horror grows over massacre of the missionaries, the message is:
WE WILL NEVER GIVE UP
Mugabe denies ZANU had any part in Rhodesia killings
Massacre mission to work on
50 die in Rhodesia
50 massacred in shoot-out
50 killed in Rhodesian 'crossfire'
50 blacks die in Rhodesia guerrilla shootout
Rhodesia fear over 'invasion'
BEGINNING OF THE BLOODBATH
FORGIVE THEM SAYS CHURCH

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ate. The researchers also invited BBC and ITV news and current affairs reporters to come on the programme and discuss the problem of reporting events in southern Africa. They met with almost total refusal.

Part of the explanation for the poor quality of journalism from Rhodesia is that correspondents there have to work, with varying degrees of enthusiasm, within the extremely tight limits laid down by the authorities. The Emergency Powers Regulations, as amended in January 1978, expressly prohibit the 'communication, publication or dissemination of information relating to (a) any measure or act of any description whatsoever of the security forces or the government for the purpose of combatting or suppressing terrorism or reducing the incidence thereof within Rhodesia; (b) the commission of any act of terrorism or sabotage.'

Officially the only exceptions to this are the regime's own handouts, reports of court or parliamentary proceedings and reports approved by the official censor. These conditions do not make for inquiring journalism. Indeed, faced with similar restrictions in India under Mrs Gandhi two years ago the BBC withdrew its correspondent. In Rhodesia BBC correspondents continue to operate.

Whenever whites are murdered in any number, helicopters are laid on to take selected journalists to the scene within hours; there are special briefings, displays of corpses of alleged guerrillas, and captured weapons to be examined. When, however, the Rhodesians do something they are not so keen to publicise – such as the killing of 100 or so 'curfew breakers' – these facilities are not available. And any journalists who break the rules and try to find out things for themselves, risk either being evicted from the country, or at least left off the helicopter ride to the scene of the next 'terrorist' atrocity. One can hardly blame the Rhodesians for behaving in this way. They are, after all, at war. What is depressing, however, is the way in which most of the British media are prepared to operate within the rules laid down by Salisbury.

RHODESIA 3
Charles Medawar

Did Shell and BP's auditors know about sanctions busting?

No need for much explanation

Very little has been said so far about the role of the auditors of Shell Mozambique – the Shell and BP owned company which supplied Rhodesia with oil, despite the existence of sanctions. There is only one reference in the Bingham Report: it appears as an aside in a document in the appendices, describing Shell Rhodesia's 1971 proposals for building a new oil blending plant in Salisbury. This document repeatedly emphasises the need for secrecy – it recommends, for example, that named attorneys be called on 'to create the required facade' – and it concludes, saying: 'The shareholders at the initial general meeting are required to appoint auditors. The auditors so appointed must be Price Waterhouse and Company.'

Price Waterhouse and Company is a major multinational firm of accountants, with extensive experience in oil. As auditors of Shell (probably only its fifth largest oil client) Price Waterhouse may or may not have been aware that Shell/BP oil was positively slurping into Rhodesia. But if not, why not? And if so, what should or might have been done?

There is a further complication: Price Waterhouse (PW) describes itself as a worldwide professional organisation, observing common standards and codes, but it comprises some 75 legally *separate* and *financially independent* firms.

Are international standards and national independence compatible? The accounts of the two Shell/BP companies most concerned (Shell South Africa and the UK-registered Shell Mozambique) were audited over the crucial years by Price Waterhouse, South Africa.

The Bingham Report is littered with evidence to suggest that, if PW didn't know for certain about oil supplies for Rhodesia, they could hardly have avoided guessing. The nub of the thing is that, shortly after UDI, these two companies between them began supplying a single customer, Freight Services, whose own oil requirements were relatively small, with enough oil to fuel half a nation.

In evidence to the Bingham Inquiry, the General Manager of Shell South Africa said that 'information relating to individual customers was available, for example, for accounting purposes' – and the Bingham Report concluded that senior managers in both Shell/BP companies, and other 'relevant personnel in Mozambique', certainly knew where Freight Services, oil was going. Referring specifically to Shell Mozambique – the company subject to UK sanctions laws – the Report also says: 'since the whole question of supply to Rhodesia was one of absorbing interest in Mozambique, it seems most unlikely that the ultimate destination of the much increased delivery to this customer would for very long have escaped detection by the company physically making the deliveries.'

Among other reasons for supposing it most unlikely that PW had no idea what was going on are those given last year, by a senior partner in Price Waterhouse (US) before a Senate Committee. The Committee wanted to know why auditors generally had largely failed to uncover or report evidence of various illegal payments – which by then had already led to the downfall of Prince Bernhardt and a number of Japanese, Italian and other politicians as well. As Senator Percy put it:

> 'How is it that accounting firms in their regular audits were unable to discover these things when there was a pervasive pattern that developed all through a profession, all through a particular industry? The Lockheed plan, for instance, was so frequently referred to, so widely known in the industry. Why wasn't it known in the accounting profession? What happened?'

In evidence to this Committee, Price Waterhouse stressed that 'anytime we encounter suspicious circumstances, we do whatever checking is necessary to resolve that suspicion' and 'we disagree flatly with any suggestion that our work does not go far enough'. It was agreed that little could be done when 'documents were deliberately falsified or information intentionally withheld from our audit staff by corporate personnel' – but it was emphasised also that, for concern for its reputation, PW would ditch (and had ditched) clients who tried it on. The implication must be that Price Waterhouse South Africa (in London) – who audited the Shell Mozambique accounts – ensured that the wool wasn't pulled over its eyes.

So what would PW have done, had they suspected that Shell/BP oil was illegally destined for Rhodesia? The answer is nothing: other than in cases of treason, there is no clear obligation on auditors to report knowledge or suspicion of criminal or unethical practice – unless these have a material bearing on the company's financial position. Despite growing awareness of, and discussion about, the public character and impact of the major corporations, it is remarkable how little auditors do to explain what really goes on in business.

On the other hand, an auditor in this position would have been likely to take matters further, behind the scenes. With illegal payments, for example PW told the US Senate Committee they insist at least that

> there should be an opinion from outside counsel that public disclosure is not necessary . . . which legal opinion must be acceptable to Price Waterhouse's outside counsel.

In the case of oil supplies, it is not clear whether legal opinion was sought over the position of Shell Mozambique. What is clear though is (a) when Shell in London learned of the position of Shell Mozambique, it thought the company was in breach of UK sanctions laws; and (b) things might have been very different had PW communicated to the shareholders in London (even privately) any suspicions about oil supplies that they may have had.

However, if PW was under no obligation to report evidence of sanctions breaking, as such it may yet prove that such a report was due, under a technical provision of audit practice. By convention, auditors are expected to make a note in the accounts if they believe there is a fair probability that something the company has (or has not) done would lead to some financial liability in the future.

In the case of Shell Mozambique, a possible 'contingent liability' has recently been acknowledged in the Company's accounts, in respect of the action by Lonrho for breach of contract and conspiracy. But, without in any way prejudging the issue, that same liability has arguably existed for a decade or more, ever since the supply of oil for Rhodesia (via the aforementioned suspicious customer) was begun. Theoretically, the question of a 'contingent liability' could have arisen also over the fines the Company might have faced for repeated violations of the UK sanctions laws. However, it remains to be seen even if the Company is to be charged.

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The tale of the pink panther

WHEN SHE BECAME Education Secretary, Shirley Williams was asked – inevitably – whether she would remove her only daughter, Becky, from Godolphin and Latymer, a North London school which remained rigorously selective. No, she replied, Becky had been going to the school for some time, since before the issue became personally explosive for Labour politicians. There had been enough stress and strain in her daughter's life, with a split marriage and a mother devoted to full-time politics. Having to change schools would really add unfairly to the burden.

Most journalists went away satisfied enough. But there was one who raised another point. The explanation was fine as far as it went, he wrote. But Godolphin and Latymer was at that very time imperilling the whole of the London comprehensive scheme by acting as a centre of resistance (which it remains). Could not Shirley Williams have, just as a parent, played some part in urging the school in other directions? He was sternly upbraided by John Lyttle, Shirley Williams's fiercely loyal personal aide. The Secretary of State had done her best, and had been to one or two meetings on the subject. But, she had reported afterwards, she found it impossible to catch the chairman's eye.

If there is truth in Quintin Hogg's theory that there is an essential anecdote about every politician, that particular story comes close to being the one for Shirley Williams's case. It demonstrates her considerable capacity for deflecting criticism – where others positively attract it – and also her capacity for generating powerful personal loyalties. But it can also be read in a somewhat damaging light. There are cynics who would decline to believe that a Cabinet Minister at a local school meeting would really be unable to catch the chairman's eye. There are others who might believe the story, but think that it casts doubt on the effectiveness of the performer in question: for a politician whose business it is to reform the world, there are a lot of difficult eyes which have to be caught and held.

A Prime Minister staggering into his last few months of office does not have many options left, and Mr Callaghan has fewer than most. One of those options is a re-shuffle of his Cabinet, and one of the best faces he can present to the public is that of Mrs Williams – who would certainly generate considerable publicity if transferred to one of the great offices of state. Greater possibilities have also been suggested: that she could be the right wing's most formidable candidate for the succession. The fact that she is routinely portrayed by the Tory press as a monster, bent on dragging the education system down into illiteracy is not, of course, precisely a handicap in party terms. But there are larger problems. Social democrats in the Labour leadership must always, sooner or later, show that their professions of radicalism are matched by actual performance (they may say, perhaps reasonably, that the tribunes of the Left are rarely submitted to such microscopic auditing). As her period at Education draws to an end, the question that is being asked about Shirley Williams is – can she deliver?

Chris Davies (Report)

THERE IS, conceivably, more than one way of reading the remark of Vera Brittain, Shirley Williams's formidable mother: 'The trouble with Shirley is to find anything you can say against her.' Those politicians who achieve change usually earn a few enemies. But even today, despite the large capacity for members of the Labour Left to hate members of the Labour Right, there are not many who have anything to say against her.

One admiring colleague says that she remains over-awed by her parents (her father is still alive), which is not less than understandable. Her mother was a Quaker, a prolific writer and lecturer, and a stormy public figure in the Peace Pledge Union and Save Europe Now. George Catlin never achieved the same prominence.

According to Vera Brittain's autobiography the marriage was 'semi-detached' – mainly due to a conflict of work – and George remained abroad for many years, teaching at and American university. Shirley's devotion to Europe and the US (which she has described as classless, if flawed) was nurtured by her parents. She attended Young Socialist conferences in Europe as a teenager, and spent time in the US during the war. She returned to America after university on a scholarship, studying US trade unions (during their most corrupt period).

Involvement in Labour politics was, for her, an act of filial conservatism. As a teenager she met Herbert Morrison, John Strachey and Arthur Greenwood; in 1945 she attended the Labour victory celebrations at Transport House. At Oxford she launched herself into politics – becoming the first female president of the Labour Club – as well as being an Isis Idol in her first term, an Isis features editor and a prolific actress. In 1954, at the precocious age of 23, she stood for Labour in a Harwich by-election, and tried again in the 1955 general election.

At the same time she was trying her hand at gossip journalism. Though her copy was suitably silly – 'Millions of girls all over the British Commonwealth of nations – and America! – would like to hear the words "You are to be presented to the Queen"' or 'Holiday time girls . . . time to meet people and time for romance' – it was not silly enough, and after a year she was asked to leave. But she landed at the *Financial Times*, where she stayed for four years. 'It was there that I learned all I know about economics,' she confessed later.

After a period teaching in Ghana and another unsuccessful candidacy in 1959 at Southampton Test, she took over the general secretaryship of the Fabian Society from her old university friend Bill Rodgers. She widened the membership from a collection of young Gaitskellites to include scientists and young trade unionists, and founded the Young Fabians. The Society received considerable publicity with pamphlets such as *What's wrong with the trade unions?* and *What's wrong with the public schools?*

She was eventually elected in 1964 at Hitchin and soon repeated her Oxford successes, becoming PPS to the Minister for Health – 'just like fagging' – chairman of the Labour Committee of Europe, vice-committee of the PLP economic and finance committee and a member of Lord Fulton's civil service commission. By 1966 she was Ray Gunter's minister of state at Labour and thus had some personal responsibility for the witchhunt against the striking seamen who upset Wilson's incomes policy. By 1967 she was working under Crosland at Education, at a time when the student New Left was at its peak. She moved to another ministry under fire when she joined Callaghan at the Home Office with a special watch on Ulster.

IT WAS while in opposition that her long marriage to the philosopher Bernard Williams broke up, and she and her daughter suffered the effect for some years. The separation may partly explain her political quiescence as the Left pushed through a radical programme of public ownership largely unchallenged save by Denis Healey. Certainly since she became a Cabinet minister it has been unlike her to shirk a battle with the Left, and from 1975 she assumed her current role as defender of the PM. By virtue of the places allotted for women she has been able to represent the Right on the party's National Executive Committee. Some say that Wilson gave her a lightweight job at Prices to give her time to stalk the Left on Transport House's myriad committees. At all events, her attendance has been assiduous, and if Foot has been the PM's fixer in the House, she has been his advocate in the party. In 1975, as Benn was fighting for his place at Industry, she put in a long paper to the NEC criticising the industrial policy with which he was associated. Largely written by Joan Mitchell, her personal economic adviser at Prices, it argued in traditional Keynesian terms that the policy took too much interest in supply 'almost totally ignoring demand or consumer interests'. The same arguments had already spilled over at a Neddy meeting when Benn accused Williams of wanting a coalition government after she had suggested that the opposition should attend such meetings and that British industry's problems largely stemmed from changes in economic policy by different political parties.

She has not, perhaps, been very discriminating in her determination to prevent left-wing contamination in the party. She spoke for Reg Prentice at Newham town hall. She tried to prevent the ex-Communist Jimmy Reid from becoming a candidate for Dundee East and she delivered a furious attack on the 'undemocratic traditions' of Trotskyism when she

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was trying to prevent Andy Bevan becoming Labour Party Youth Officer. Bevan points out that Williams had only met him twice previously across a committee room. At Grunwick she vigorously defended the stance of Roy Grantham of APEX, condemning the 'wholly unhelpful' attitude of the far left.

She has rejoined forces with Grantham more recently to argue that the manifesto should not be based on the document produced by the Research Department (and extensively leaked last month) but on the TUC-Labour Party document *Into the Eighties*. Her charge against the research department document is classic Callaghan: the policies are too detailed.

For all this, she remains broadly popular. In 1970 she was elected straight into the Shadow Cabinet at her first attempt. And in 1976 she did surprisingly well against Michael Foot in the election for party leadership. It somewhat mystified those who are, inevitably, her rivals for the support of the Right: Roy Hattersley, for instance, feels that she can sail serenely through controversies which would leave anyone like himself buried in flak.

It is a precarious tightrope to tread, however, and the dangers have been well-illustrated by her performance at Education. Her humanity and warmth have given her a comparatively easy ride – it is notable that demonstrating students do not shout 'Williams out' as they did with Mulley and Prentice – but her persistent failure to deliver has left many patiences wearing thin. Her time as Education Secretary has merely highlighted the contradictions of wanting to better people's lives while remaining a strict economic conservative. Her hawkishness on public expenditure cuts as a means of reducing inflation left her compromised when it came to getting more money for a department which already costs the country £6 billion a year.

THE AMBIVALENCE of her position was exposed again recently in the campaign for educational maintenance awards. One of her first major speeches as Education Secretary was about the urgent need to provide for 16 to 19 year-olds, but the annual investment of £100 million involved in the scheme intimidated her from arguing too forcefully for it, even though Cabinet colleagues were simultaneously pushing through equally expensive projects in their own departments. The result is that a future white paper has only just been announced and there is still a long period of opinion-gathering to endure before the paper is published. The fight for the scheme was embarrassingly lost in Cabinet after she had forecast a victory, and the initiative (financial and authoritative) has now passed to the Manpower Services Commission.

There have been successes. She has reduced the level of Boyson-type hysteria which threatened to overwhelm the public debate on education. She has maintained central funding for adult literacy, approved the early retirement schemes for teachers, shifted the balance of official opinion towards seeing the importance of continuing education throughout life, given an unexpected endorsement to pupil governors and gradually implemented the comprehensive reorganisation clauses of the 1976 Act.

There is little evidence, however, that any coherent socialist philosophy guides education policy. It may be asking much to expect anyone – particularly Shirley Williams – to take on the massive conservatism of the education establishment outside the DES and tribalism inside, but she has made little of the opportunities available to her. The sections on school governing bodies in the new Education Bill merely endorse what already exists rather than attempting to change the pattern of influence and power in the system. 'She doesn't seem to understand what it's like to have a child in a comprehensive and how important it is for parents to have a say in what goes on in school,' says one disillusioned school governor. 'It's a patrician attitude to education.' A more serious criticism is that she is preoccupied with the problems of the elite – sixth forms, universities – rather than those of working-class children who are lucky to get as far as CSEs. Even on issues where she has unequivocally stated her position, such as the abolition of corporal punishment, she has not used the power she could wield. On others – such as sex discrimination in education, particularly in the further and higher sectors – she remains strangely unmoved.

Michael Ward (Topix)

Good on her feet, but does she deliver?

She was, of course, handicapped from the moment she took over Education in September 1976, partly by the cuts in public expenditure and partly by Callaghan's Ruskin speech, delivered just a month after her appointment, which set off those farcical regional conferences which even the Prime Minister must now blush to recall. Unfortunately for her the 'Great Debate' stirred up a whole range of issues and thus brought out her tendency to spread herself too widely. Go for two or three key issues and leave the rest, with instructions, to civil servants, Crosland had told her years before. When she rejoined the DES, however, Callaghan had made sure that everything was on the educational agenda, and so she had to be involved in everything – 'trying to do the job of a hundred higher executive officers.' As minister of state in 1967-9 she is said to have set back comprehensive reorganisation by at least six months because she insisted on taking through each individual case herself. When she left, civil servants breathed again: the amount of paper dramatically declined, the decision making went up.

Her indecisiveness is partly a consequence of this scattiness: she has the courage to raise issues for discussion, but seldom gets round to calling a halt and taking a firm decision.
Although there are others who would be more effective and more seriously radical in the job (Hattersley and Fowler are two obvious candidates – and thereby diminish their chances as the Prime Minister would not want too original an Education Secretary), Shirley Williams promised much and has – so far – delivered little apart from keeping things together and raising morale. One cynical view is that her only major achievement is to have expanded the private sector. Too cynical, but the underlying faults are already clear – a lack of any well-defined philosophy with which to lead the education service and a fear of the unknown. She has done the easy part well – listening, caring – but, like the true conservative she is, has failed to move on from caring to curing.

Does she recognise these limitations? As long ago as 1971 she professed disbelief that her success in politics could last much longer, and wistfully discussed the possibilities of moving, Boyle-like, into educational administration (more recently it has been suggested that Lancaster may be keeping warm for her). But several tempting political jobs will soon be open as well – some Labour MPs see her as the Right's only chance against Tony Benn – and she has, colleagues suspect, begun to deceive herself about her own weaknesses. After the show band from Islington Green Comprehensive School had heralded her appearance at a Labour dinner last Saturday with one of Henry Mancini's most famous film tunes, she praised the 'appropriateness' of the music: 'There are red panthers and there are blue panthers, but I'm a pink panther.' But is the description really appropriate? Shirley Williams, like her ex-employer the *Financial Times*, looks pink in physical appearance alone. And the animal which springs to mind is not so much a dangerous wild creature as a friendly, comfortable household cat.

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CHINA
Ross Terrill

How fast is Mao's influence fading and what is replacing it?

Reading between the wall posters

IN NANKING a voice addressed me in the street at twilight: 'Are you a foreign visitor?' The mandarin phrase was touched with a Shanghai accent and the speaker turned out to be an electrical technician on short-term assignment to this remote (for him) city not far from the Vietnam border. Soon Mr Too asked me back to his hostel. There we talked of Nanking's good and bad points and of trends in Shanghai. As Mr Too showed me family photos he remarked that 'the foreigner is no longer considered an enemy'.

For the first time in five trips to China I found that people met at random talked to me at length, and asked me back to their place. In the lush southern city of Canton I went to a Cultural Park I know well. Among its entertainments is a shooting gallery. You rent an airgun and fire shots toward a mock landscape. In 1971 the landscape was dotted with evil-looking American GIs. In the mid-1970s, still soldiers, but without any marks of national identity. This time you fired at ducks, giraffes, and lions.

Culture is being de-politicised a bit. You go to a concert (perhaps hearing Mozart or Liszt) and the performers do not offer a political message at the start or wave Mao's *Quotations* at the end, as used to be done. You can spend an evening at the theatre, or go to an exhibition of recent paintings, without hearing or seeing any political theme at all.

The government is trying to offer bread as well as circuses. It is an age of economics for still-poor China. People are working harder because a factory worker's wage can now be augmented by a 15 per cent bonus for doing an outstanding job. Slogans on factory walls are more often about speed and quality of output than about political generalities. China's foreign trade rose by some 60 per cent in 1978, compared with 1977. Chinese oil is starting to flow to Asia. High-technology goods from the West and Japan are putting much needed muscle into China's industry. Overseas Chinese businessmen in Hongkong and other parts of Asia are welcomed by Peking as partners in joint enterprises and even as private investors.

There is also, in the mood of China just now, a rather unusual blend of freedom and authority. Late in 1978 wall posters appeared in Peking criticising Mao and asking for a government of laws, not of men. Mao was a 'modern dictator,' said one of these handwritten sheets, whose 'new religion' suppressed the people and 'kept them in the dark'. You pull out a camera to photograph a huge statue of Mao at the entrance to a university in Shanghai and a group of students intervene to say: 'Oh don't take that picture – we're pulling the thing down next week.'

There is a certain amount of political stirring in China. Many sophisticated urban younger people urge a period of steadiness so that they may know where they stand. They want laws which will protect them and to which haughty Communist bureaucrats will be accountable. They demand open and credible decision-making in matters that affect their lives.

But there are contrary voices. And there are strict limits to how far China could move in our time towards due process and constitutionalism – let alone electoral democracy. China and the West have drawn closer in foreign policy, but that carries little possibility of any convergence between the two types of social system. So far, the hand of the state is no less firm than in the past, as witness the very large number of executions for crimes of various kinds during 1978.

The wall posters of November-December were not purely spontaneous. Yes, deeply-held views were being expressed. But no, they wouldn't have been without a wink of encouragement from some top leaders. The display was a semi-official campaign by Teng's group to consolidate the current pragmatic line by building up pressure to remove one or two dogmatic ultra-leftists still in the Politburo.

HUA AND TENG were at year's end in rather uneasy harness with each other as China's leaders. At the most recent National Day Party in Peking I watched the pair of them together. Teng: squat, flinty, world-weary, not seemingly enraptured by the gushing songs being performed in front of him. Hua: lumbering, amiable, his open if bland face beaming constantly as he listened to songs that praised him as Mao-like.

The two leaders sat at a table separated by the Prime Minister of Nepal. In political terms they are separated by forces far more weighty than the Nepalese.

Hua is Mao's chosen man in a season of de-Maoisation. Teng, twice purged by Mao, does not share that discomfort. Hua rose to prominence during the Cultural Revolution of which Teng was a major target. Teng is older than Hua and he played a much bigger role in the Chinese revolution than did his nominal superior.

Certainly the US-China normalisation has slightly reduced the strains within the Chinese government. Somehow or other, Hua and Teng managed to pull together on that issue. The will to Maoise continues, yes: but it has been convenient for Hua to recall that Mao himself began the tilt towards America. The age of economics will get a boost from American technology, know-how, and loans. And those few voices remaining near the top – some military, some ultra-leftist – who murmured that the post-1972 link with Washington had borne little fruit for China will find their tongues tied for the time being.

The demands in the wall posters have been fairly modest and in a way this makes them the more potent. Another ground for hope is that Mao has gone. There will not be a replacement for him, not another demi-God in whom truth and power are fused, who rules by the snap of his fingers. Moreover, the social modernisation going on in China is producing a kind of urban middle class which is too well-informed and assertive to be dealt with as a flock of tame sheep.

On the other hand, China is mainly its hundreds of millions of peasants, not its tens of thousands of urban demonstrators. 'America is the most developed country in the world,' ran one poster in Peking, 'because it has no idols or superstitions.' Rural China still has both.

What are the prospects? China will make a big economic impact, especially in Asia, but per capita GNP is likely to remain below US$1000 for the next 20 years, so Chinese income levels and way of life are not going to become like ours. During 1979 about one million foreign tourists (including overseas Chinese) will visit China. That's a big influx by previous standards. But it's not enough to shake the values of the one billion Chinese, or end overnight their social isolation from the rest of the world.

More purges and fights? Yes, but not in the blood and thunder manner of the late Mao years. Tensions will be less ideological and more sociological: provinces and various sectors of the economy (plus the weapons-hungry army) tugging against each other over the allocation of resources; urban-rural cleavages; the expression of grievances by the 'lost generation' that missed out on a good education during the ultra-leftist hoopla of the Cultural Revolution; growth of unemployment as farm and factory mechanise.

In world politics, it will be China's shadow as a conventional great power, rather than China as a base for stirring up revolutions, that will furrow some Asian brows. Peking's present very considerable influence on the Burmese government, for example, will be more of a model of China's future impact in Asia than its present ambiguous support for the Communist Party of Thailand.

Normalisation with the USA is more the end of an anomaly than the dawn of a Golden Age. There will be strains between the two countries, especially over Taiwan. Nevertheless the 'marriage' (after 6 years of uneasy living in sin) will solidify the pro-Western orientation of Chinese foreign policy. It will reduce any temptation that might exist in Peking to ease the burden and cost of the dispute with Russia by practising detente towards the north as well as towards the south.

The historic goals of the Chinese Revolution in its larger sense – first stated by Sun Yat-Sen – are re-asserting themselves after an unsteady period: to lift the Chinese people out of backwardness; to catch up with the West; to make China a great world power as befits a great civilisation. And we should recall that there are quite a few people in Taiwan who also believe in those essentially nationalistic goals of Sun Yat-Sen.

ROSS TERRILL, of Harvard University's East Asian Research Centre, is the author of several books on China including one just published, The Future of China: After Mao.

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CEYLON
Christopher Hitchens

Deprivation and discrimination in a 'Democratic Socialist Republic'

The Third World in miniature

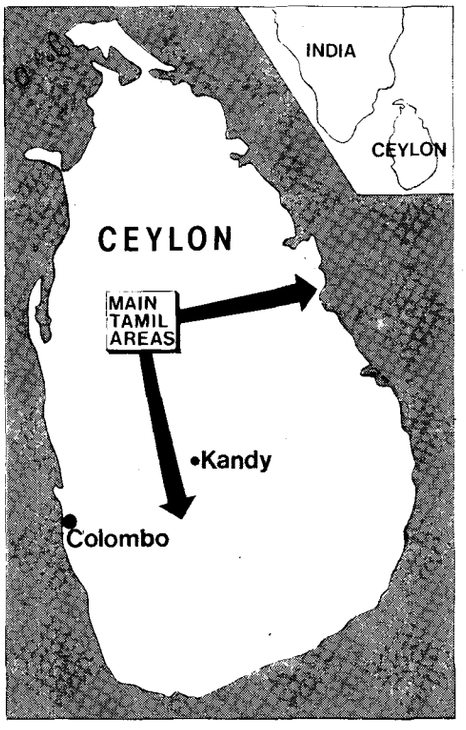
What though the spicey breezes
Blow soft o'er Ceylon's isle:
Though every prospect pleases
And only man is vile:
In vain with lavish kindness
The gifts of God are strown;
The heathen in his blindness
Bows down to wood and stone.

Bishop Reginald Heber was, of course, an old fool of the old school, and knew no more about Ceylon than he did about 'Greenland's icy mountains'. Like most missionary perceptions of the East, his was almost exactly wrong. The people of Ceylon are far from vile, but their country is surrounded by a rich vista of prospects; all of them excessively unpleasing. The island is in many ways a convenient miniature of the Third World and its problems, displaying all or most of the features which dog that group of countries cynically known to the rich nations as 'developing'.

These could be summarised as: a one crop economy (in this case, tea) which is at the mercy of the world market and which determines the division of labour inside the country. Then, immense rural and urban unemployment (nearly 20 per cent) which has doubled since 1970. Next, an extremely low average age (half the population of Ceylon is under 25) coupled with acute overproduction of graduates and trained people who are faced with a choice between joblessness and emigration (Ceylon has the highest literacy rate in Asia after Japan, and an immense brain drain to the Middle East).

Continuing the saga, one encounters the 'debt trap' which places the country in hock for years ahead and eventually saddles it with debts which absorb almost the entire GNP on servicing and repayment alone. Ceylon is a dramatic example of this dependency, having become over the years one of the outstanding basket cases of the IMF and the World Bank. In 1977 it borrowed $243.31 million from the West, and $265.51 million from Comecon. Previous years involved similar staggering totals, which will saddle future generations for as long as it is feasible to foresee. Military expenditure increases this dependence, since all the gear has to come from advanced nations – Ceylon required a large transfusion of this kind in order to put down the youth insurrection which took place in 1971. The political prisoners from this period are only just being released, with their tales of torture and starvation beginning to make a cautious appearance in sections of the government-dominated press.

Ceylon also has the other common post-colonial features – a largely pre-colonial economic elite (with Brooke Bond and Liptons still dominating large sections of business) and a severe ethnic problem inherited from the days of divide and rule. When the British withdrew, they simply handed power to the ascendant Sinhala elite, who ever since have treated the large Tamil minority and its language as second class. In one aspect they even treat them as serfs, having removed the franchise from the 'plantation Tamils' brought by the British from India to work the arduous tea-growing hillsides. The name 'Sri Lanka' incidentally, simply means 'Holy Ceylon' in



Sinhala, and as such reflects the Buddhist and chauvinist character of the upper crust. Nobody calls it anything but Ceylon.

The culminating symbol of Third World despair, found here in a very developed form, is the habit of titling this mess of exploitation and bankruptcy 'socialist'. The term is almost obligatory in the 'developing' world; from Mugabe to Mintoff and from Somalia to Singapore. Be your country never so cockroach capitalist, it is still necessary to proclaim a 'progressive' character. The 'Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka' is a pacesetter in this respect, switching from autarchy to free trade and back with gay abandon. Wood and stone still have their part to play, as Bishop Heber would probably not have predicted. Strictly speaking, the tooth of Buddha (which is the main totem of the island's ruling elite) is presumably made of ivory. Last month, faced with a catastrophic cyclone in the eastern province of the island, the government allowed a special showing of the 'tooth relic' in the holy city of Kandy, and caused special trains to run between the capital and the shrine. The whole affair was reminiscent of those Christian Democratic miracles which occur in Italy at election times; liquefying blood or animating images for the greater consolation of the ticket. The queues which stretched into the distance, guarded by uniformed policemen and monks with saffron robes and rolled umbrellas (rolled umbrellas?) were pretty solidly Sinhala.

This was ironic, because the victims of the cyclone were pretty solidly Tamil, and nobody had laid on any special festivities for them. Last year, as in some previous years, fanatical racial and religious pogroms were visited on the Tamil community, which before British rule had its own areas and kingdoms. In the 1977 election, almost every Tamil seat was won by a party which proclaims the desire for a separate state ('socialist', of course).

Tamils suffer discrimination at every level, from employment and language through to the elementary question of physical safety, and the concessions announced by the present government have come too late to make any real difference to their mood. Just to make matters worse, official corruption and incompetence have obstructed the cyclone relief operation and eroded much of the remaining trust placed by Tamils in the central government. (It hasn't done much for the confidence of the foreign embassies in Ceylon either: too many of them have seen their consignments of blankets, clothes and lanterns turning up in the World Market bazaar by Colombo central railway station.)

In recent months, guerrilla warfare has started to intensify in the Tamil-dominated North of the island, with bombs and bank robberies becoming a commonplace. The Tamil MPs in the capital talk gloomily, in their imitation-Westminister surroundings, about the difficulty of restraining the 'militants' if they are not given autonomy. (Does that remind you of anything? It seems to remind the government only of the necessity of firm action and increased military presence.) One gets the depressing impression of another round of Third World intercommunal hatred building up, with partition or continued discrimination as the two most likely outcomes.

Meanwhile, the government presses busily on with a policy of mortgaging the country to the international terms of trade and the Asian division of labour. The latest phase of this process is known as the 'Free Trade Zone' (FTZ) which operates very much as it sounds (except that the government regards industries outside it as under 'socialist self-management', which as usual means free enterprise for the poor).

The concept of the FTZ involves letting foreign capital write its own ticket, in the hope that employment will be provided and exports generated. Tax holidays are limitless and every effort is made (by legislation in this case) to ensure that trade unions cannot bargain from strength. The new draft law in Ceylon allows the President to decide on whether or not a strike is illegal and allows employers to dismiss workers with impunity. But this is not the main disadvantage of an FTZ, as a report by Professor Dudley Seers on Ceylon made clear some five years ago. The problem is that it distorts the labour market, leads to irresponsible repatriation of profit and frequently ends with the firms concerned moving on at the end of the 'holiday' leaving workers jobless and the environment spoiled. Moreover, as has been found in Singapore and Taiwan, the 'new jobs' are often provided by expanding the labour force and recruiting cheap female workers; so that the net effect on unemployment is actually reduced.

The growth of FTZs in the Third World, and the abject admission by many governments that the multinationals are the only organisers of world production, has led to some startling propaganda. In Malaysia, for instance, the government has issued a leaflet saying 'Labour rates in Malaysia are amongst the lowest in the region and female factory workers can be hired for approximately $1.50 a day'. This is the sort of competition, marketing unemployment like a commodity, that

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Ceylon has got to beat. A wave of cost-cutting is spreading over southern Asia at the moment, and the Democratic Socialist Republic is in there with the best of them. Perhaps this is why the President recently made a speech in which he said that developing countries 'need not always observe the letter' of the UN Declaration on Human Rights.

This whole configuration has a very bad effect on the Left, which has declined terribly in Ceylon over the last decade. Though not a typical Third World socialist movement (its senior figure, Dr N. M. Perera, calls himself a Trotskyist and chairs the Cricket Board of Control) it does have the familiar problems. On the occasions when the Left parties have sat in government, they have administered austerity and orthodoxy with absolute confidence, as if hypnotised by the power of the multinationals and the IMF. They also have a very bad record of truckling to anti-Tamil racialism among their Sinhala constituents, and of dropping demands for self-determination when they became electorally expensive. The last government, which included both the Communist Party and the ex-Trotskyist Party, unquestioningly supported the imprisonment and torture of thousands of young rebels after the 1971 insurrection, and its leaders still resent any call for an inquiry into that period. As a result, activity on the Left has devolved more on to younger and untried revolutionaries, whose programme is an unsorted box of ideas from Mao, from Guevara and elsewhere. They pursue an unsteady course between 'armed struggle' and parliamentary reformism, and cannot make up their minds about Tamil self-determination either.

If Ceylon is a case study for the Third World – and in many ways it is more fortunate than the rest of Asia – then the prognosis is not good. As the neglect and the exploitation grows, so does the demagogy and the despotism, and so does the tendency for each province or race or local enterprise to fragment or go its own way. If Bishop Heber returned to the matter, he would doubtless blame the people of Ceylon for gradually taking their place among the wretched of the earth.

LAW

Lord Denning by himself

NEXT WEEK, on 23 January, Lord Denning, Master of the Rolls and appeal court judge for more than 30 years, will be 80 years old. And to celebrate the occasion, his new book *The Discipline of Law** will be published.

Lord Denning still sits as a judge and enjoys a wide reputation as a liberal and a reformer. The theme of his book, which reviews the history of his own judgements, is, in Denning's words, that 'the principles of law laid down by the judges of the 19th century – however suited to social conditions of that time – are not suited to the social necessities and social opinion of today'. The policy bases of Denning's judgements are, more often than not, made explicit and he claims to seek the legislative purpose when reaching a decision. The older school of judges disagreed, insisting that only the words used in a statute were to be examined, without reference to extrinsic sources such as White Papers. 'That,' says Denning, 'is the traditional view expressed, as usual, by Lord Simonds in his most dogmatic fashion'. Lord Simonds, in Denning's view, is 'a dominating intellect, but cast in a most conservative mould'.

It takes a certain brazenness of the pot/kettle variety for Denning to criticise others for their conservative tendencies. In the case of *Grunwick v ACAS* he declared in the Court of Appeal that ACAS's report recommending that the union, APEX, should be recognised was null and void, on the ground that ACAS had not ascertained the views of non-strikers, despite making every effort to do so. (Surprisingly, no mention of this case appears in the book.) At the time, Denning said:

> Counsel for ACAS urged us to give these provisions (of the Employment Protection Act) a liberal construction so as to forward the policy of the statute which is in favour of collective bargaining and trade union recognition. Time and again he said that any other construction would be 'unworkable' . . . In all cases of statutory interpretation I am in favour of a liberal construction. But 'liberal' can be used both ways. Not only in construing powers, but also in construing safeguards. This statute makes great powers available to trade unions . . . The union can go to ACAS and get a recommendation for recognition and thence to the committee and get an award. By that award there can be inserted in every man's contract terms and conditions to which neither he nor his employer have agreed. Such an interference of individual liberty could hardly be tolerated in a free society unless there were safeguards against abuse. So I would construe these safeguards in favour of the individual and not in favour of the trade union.

THIS POSING OF THE TRADE UNION versus the individual shows how close is Denning's philosophy to that of the National Association for Freedom and the right wing of the Tory party. A few months earlier, he had heard an appeal by

John Gouriet of NAFF and found in his favour, granting an injunction to prevent the Post Office unions blacking communications with South Africa. The move had been called for by the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, as part of a week's international solidarity against apartheid.

It is common knowledge that Denning picks and chooses many of his cases. This is his account of how he came to hear the Gouriet appeal:

> I looked into my clerk's room to say I was going. My clerk told me: There is an urgent application to be made tomorrow morning. But there is no need for you to come up for it. I asked what it was about. He told me in a sentence: 'The judge in chambers has just refused an injunction against the Post Office Union. The losers want to appeal'. I said: 'I think I ought to come up and sit on it myself'. So I did.

According to the Denning philosophy, we have, on the one hand, trade unions against whom we need safeguarding and, on the other, fine citizens who come to the courts as representatives of the public good, seeking to enforce the law on gambling, pornography and other such areas of social concern. The latter are among Denning's heroes. Coincidentally, perhaps, they all seem to be on the Right. The interventions of Raymond Blackburn, says Denning, have 'nearly always . . . proved most useful', while Ross McWhirter was 'another remarkable person – who was concerned for the public good . . . He took a stand against evil'. The UPW's attempted stand against the evil of apartheid receives less acclaim; and as for the broadcasting unions' attempt to stop transmission of the 1977 Cup Final to South Africa, said Denning, this amounted to 'coercive action unconnected with a trade dispute. It is an unlawful interference with the freedom of the press. It is self-created power of censorship.' An injunction was granted, not surprisingly, against the trade unionists. The illegality of apartheid in international law does not seem to impinge on Lord Denning's concept of maintaining the rule of law.

THE LIST OF DECISIONS by Denning against trade unions or trade unionists is impressive. It includes an injunction against building trade unionists picketing against lump labour; an injunction against the International Federation of Seamen's Unions from blacking a ship sailing under a flag of convenience which would not comply with the Federation's standards; an injunction against the TGWU from blacking oil for a hotel with whom it was in dispute (the court held there was no 'trade dispute'); and most recently, an injunction against the NUJ to prevent blacking of the Press Association in support of industrial action.

Of course, Denning has much to his credit. He has tried to assist deserted and, more recently, battered wives. He has helped the consumer against wide-reaching exclusion clauses in contracts ('the company is not liable for damage howsoever caused' etc). He has extended the scope of the claim for negligence. As a more double-edged achievement, he has done much to create a system of administrative law, whereby the courts can intervene to correct mistakes and injustices by voluntary associations, local authorities, ministers, tribunals and so on.

He is known as champion of 'the little man' against the might of institutions, but while this fits his anti-trade union stance, it does not always ring true. Under Denning, the Court of Appeal upheld the expulsion from college of a student teacher, despite the fact that it had been carried out under a retrospective rule. Said Denning:

> Instead of going into lodgings she had this man with her, night after night, in the hall of residence where such a thing was absolutely forbidden. That is a fine example to set to others! . . . She would never make a teacher. No parent would knowingly entrust their child to her care.

This again, is not a case to which Denning refers in his book. Nor does he cover the way in which he removed the protection of the Rent Acts from thousands of tenants (by renaming them licencees). Nor does he explain how he declined to intervene against decisions taken to the detriment of claimants by the Supplementary Benefits Appeal Tribunal, while zealously supporting Freddie Laker, and Tameside council in its opposition to comprehensive education.

But as his 80th birthday approaches, let us be benevolent. It is good that the policy bases of decisions should be given. Further, Denning's decisions are written in good, clear English, often full of waspish wit. Let us wish him a happy birthday; and a happy, immediate retirement.

Jeremy Smith

**The Discipline of Law, Butterworth, £4.50, £8 cased.*

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Lockout Diary

☐ Quite a few newspapermen live in the same New York apartment complex as I do. During the strike which closed the papers here for 88 days in the Autumn, I would commiserate with them and ask about prospects for a settlement. They would answer politely but, now that the positions are reversed and they are asking me that very question, I can see how irritating it is to keep having to give the same, negative reply. For a time it was satisfying to rap them on the knuckles and point out that at the London *Times* it is not a strike but a lockout, but even that palls after a while. At least, though, I am being fully paid during the lull, while the unfortunate reporters on the New York papers had to take jobs on the mainly dreadful strike sheets to make ends meet. Writing a diary for the NS is a great pleasure by comparison and I have been encouraged in doing so by Charles Douglas-Home, my genial foreign editor. In a pre-Christmas telephone call he said that the *Times* would take a 'relaxed' view of any freelance work its staff undertook to keep their typing fingers from petrifying. Indeed, relaxation seems the official watchword. Ivan Barnes, the foreign news editor, sent a note to us all late in December relaying an instruction from William Rees-Mogg, the editor, that we must all have 'a happy and restful Christmas and New Year' and not let ourselves get unduly depressed. Obedient to a fault. I am sure we all complied. If the *Times* never reappears, it may at least be said of us that we passed away contentedly, a relaxed smile playing about our lips.

☐ There is clearly concern at New Printing House Square about the morale of those of us who toil in foreign fields. To use our time, we have been instructed to 'cultivate contacts, do some background reading or pay visits to places which you have not had time to visit before'. In order that we should not feel left out of the continuing drama, fat packets of documents arrive regularly from London, containing bulletins from the management as well as a catholic selection of press clippings, even including the notorious NS piece about Rees-Mogg's and Harold Evans's surprising financial arrangements. What I look forward to most in the packages are the reports of the meetings at which Rees-Mogg summons heads of departments to give them news of the latest developments – or the lack of them – what Barnes describes as 'the Gospel according to William'. It is apparent that these talks have a vintage Rees-Mogg character and I wish I could hear them in person. In one, discussing the possibility of staff defections: 'he cautioned against anybody thinking that one could avoid "the storm of the world" by leaving the *Times* to join another Fleet Street paper. The rest of Fleet Street has just as serious battles to be fought.' In another: 'He hoped the (journalists') Chapel would have the common sense to see that they had been subject throughout to powerful influences of persuasion that do not accord either with their interests or the underlying future of their members'. I am fairly sure that the hint in the last phrase of savage physical reprisals was inadvertent but, aside from that, could 'powerful influences of persuasion' really refer to Jake Ecclestone, Father of the *Times* NUJ Chapel, who is one of the most unassuming leaders of organised labour I have come across? The only person who ever did have a mesmeric effect at our Chapel meetings was Peter Jay, who would baffle us all with the opacity of his economic pronouncements, before he was called away to try the same trick with the United States administration.

☐ The flow of documents from London was at its plumpest and fastest during the first two hectic weeks of December, when the management were desperately trying to agree a contract with the NUJ to avoid having to fire their journalists. As the deadline approached I detected an increasingly strident tone in the communications, amounting almost to hysteria. While Ecclestone was sending cosy notes thanking members for being 'warm and supportive' of him in his resistance to the initial management terms, Rees-Mogg was furiously penning letters to us about 'immensely powerful forces' working against the paper's future, and speaking darkly of propaganda. In a letter to foreign correspondents, he told us that if notice were to be given to NUJ members, we should not be included, unless we specifically asked to be, since we had been unable to attend the Chapel meetings at which the fateful decisions were taken. This smelled fishy. Who, after all, would volunteer for dismissal? Seeking guidance, I reached for my handbook of Marxist precepts and found the heading '*Capitalists, cynical manoeuvres of*'. It explained that the boss class would often employ divisive tactics against the working class movement: and there was cross-reference to the heading '*Solidarity*'. So I dashed off a reply to the effect that I had faith in the ability of my elected representatives to protect my interests and I should not want to be excluded from the consequences of their decisions, 'even if they were to include the provocative and unjustified measures which management had proposed'. The impact of this purgative, self-sacrificing gesture was seriously diluted by the fact that I had not received the editor's letter until after agreement with the NUJ had been reached. Still, when Dennis MacShane becomes emperor, I shall at least have a piece of paper to wave in the faces of the Red Guard as they cart me away on my tumbril.

☐ When I try to explain the dispute at the *Times* to Americans, they generally make the point that the management seem to be trying to reach in one go a position that it is taking American newspapers many years of negotiation to achieve. The New York strike was over the single issue of manning in the press room. After 88 days the managements (possibly because of the earlier defection of Rupert Murdoch) won fewer concessions than they had hoped. Manning of the machines was reduced by just one, from twelve to eleven, although there is to be a significant cut in the number of apprentices assigned to each press room. A closer parallel with the London dispute was at the *Washington Star*, a long-ailing newspaper which was bought last year by *Time*, Inc. Possibly inspired by the class-war heroics of Gray's Inn Road, *Time* said they would close the paper for good on New Year's Day unless they reached new agreements with their eleven unions. Such niceties as periods of notice were not mentioned. The *Star* did fail to appear for one day but after that the agreements were signed rapidly and it is now publishing again. The moral is that you should make such drastic threats only if you are fairly certain that your opponents are neither strong enough nor balky enough to force you to carry them out. Through failing to observe this elementary precaution, Times Newspapers must pay millions of pounds to idle staff for months, with no guarantee that in doing so they are investing in the future of their papers.

☐ Not that we are entirely idle. Most *Sunday Times* reporters seem to be writing books or long magazine articles involving frequent transatlantic travel. For the rest of us there are more homely diversions. A cable arrived last week inviting me to meet Sir Harold Wilson (remember?) in his suite at the Waldorf, where he would 'present a British view of the Sadat-Begin-Carter peace negotiations'. Before getting down to that he confided how much he was missing the *Times*, both as a paper of record and for its letters page 'to which I occasionally contribute'. He spoiled the compliment, though, by confessing his preference for the *Daily Telegraph*. He explained that he was friendly with Lady Hartwell, a close neighbour whom he would often meet at Lord Weidenfeld's publishing parties. And what about those Middle East peace prospects? 'I don't see any immediate sign of progress. It won't be easy to clinch all the details. There must be a possibility of a peace treaty this year but there's quite a long way to go.' Such are the penetrating insights you gain from reading the *Telegraph*.

Michael Leapman

(This week's diarist is the New York correspondent of The Times.)

This England

Prizes: £3 book token for first entry, £2 tokens for others printed. Paste entries on a postcard.

☐ The government of the Shah of Iran was always far from perfect. He was vainglorious and autocratic. Unforgivably, his regime was stained by corruption, nepotism and brutality. None of these things justifies the poisonous attacks on the Shah in some British newspapers. – Letter in *Sunday Express* (F. Peet)

☐ The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents' *Car on the Road* bulletin reports on the case of a driver who was stopped and breathalysed by the police in Kent after he had drunk six pints of lager. He passed the breath test, but wrote an angry letter to his local consumer protection department claiming that the lager was under strength. — *The Scotsman* (Harry Milne)

☐ Some of us were unable to walk on the ice or get a car out. Those who receive social security money for doing nothing should have been put to work clearing roads. – *Bexhill-on-Sea Observer* (Bridget Stevens)

☐ Bowlers, toppers, antiquarian apparel purchased. — Ad. in *Daily Telegraph* (Roger Sampson)

☐ A man who took his son on a Christmas steam railway ride has complained that there were no fairies on the train. The 'Santa Specials' were organised by the Nene Valley Railway on a stretch of private track near Peterborough, and posters for the excursions said that Father Christmas would hand out presents and that 'elves, pixies and fairies' would be on the trains. A complaint has now been made to the county consumer protection department that only elves and pixies were present. – *Guardian* (D. Cobell)

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LETTERS to the EDITOR

Pass the marmalade

Sir, In his article on Eritrea last week, John Pilger drew attention to the attitude of the British Government towards aid going to the mass of the population in Eritrea. In order to get the situation into perspective, it is important to understand that about 75 per cent of the population live in the countryside in the eastern half of the country which is still under the control of the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) and are therefore served by the Eritrean Relief Association. The other 25 per cent are either in the towns now occupied by the Ethiopian army (together with their Soviet comrades) or the sparsely occupied areas of the Western lowlands where the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) operates and where humanitarian services are provided by the Eritrean Red Cross/Red Crescent Society.

Although the British Government have now agreed that they will assist with transport costs of humanitarian supplies to Eritrea, they have deliberately put conditions on the way in which grants are administered which mean that they will continue to discriminate against ERA and therefore the majority of the population. They have stated that goods for Eritrea will be eligible for the grant only if consigned to the International Committee of the Red Cross delegation in Sudan who are sharing supplies equally between each (Eritrean) agency. The Ministry of Overseas Development specifically state that goods must be consigned to the ICRC and not to any agency by name.

No doubt the Government will dress this decision up as a humanitarian gesture based on a response to public opinion. In fact it is a deliberate slap in the face to the Eritrean Relief Association and through them to the ordinary people of Eritrea who have suffered so terribly in the last 17 years largely because Britain as the Protectorate Power, which handed them over to the Federation with Ethiopia in 1952, failed to raise the matter at the UN when even that bogus institution was abrogated by Haile Selassie in 1962.

The ICRC will distribute relief as it thinks fit. The amount of aid going to Eritrea from international sources has recently increased from the pitiful to the inadequate. This does not excuse the British Government from intentionally trying to reduce the amount of aid going from Britain to the largest section of the population there.

The American journalist, Dan Connell, told a Press Conference on 15 January that he recently watched refugees, wounded by Soviet MIGs as they sheltered in the desert, die through lack of medical supplies; he told us that food, shelter and medicines were desperately short everywhere, that there were not even enough bandages in Eritrea to bind up the wounded. Yet, if War on Want were to send them £5,000 worth of supplies tomorrow it would cost us up to another £2,000 to transport them.

Is it too much to hope that when the Ministers concerned pick up their copies of the NS on Friday morning they will pause for a moment before they finish their cornflakes, bacon and eggs, buttered toast and coffee and think again about this squalid decision to make it as difficult as possible for the British people to help the majority of those suffering in Eritrea?

MARY DINES
General Secretary

War on Want
467 Caledonian Road
London N7

Motability: a statement

The NEW STATESMAN of 20 October 1978, included an article entitled 'Disablement turned to account' about the Motability scheme, which provides disabled people with the use of a car and is, as we stated, a scheme beneficial to a great number of disabled people. Although we criticised certain aspects of the scheme we wish to stress that it was not our intention to cast any aspersions on the integrity or sincerity of purpose of Lord Goodman or Mr Jeffrey Sterling or any of their colleagues. In addition we did not and do not intend to suggest that the Chairman and Board of Motability had available to them a scheme superior to that which is now in operation and we are pleased to learn from Motability that a hire purchase scheme will shortly be introduced.

The conquering blend

Sir, The addition of grain whisky neither degrades nor adulterates malt whisky as stated by Bruce Page (NS 22 and 29 December). What it does is to transform it into the drink which has conquered the world.

Both are genuine whiskies, matured in precisely the same manner and a typical blended Scotch will contain as many as 40 individual malt and grain whiskies. Each has been carefully selected to bring out the best qualities in the others and each has its own specific contribution to make to the quality of the blend.

The presence of a higher proportion of malt whisky in the blend is not in itself a guarantee that the brand is of a higher quality than others which might contain less malt whisky. The quality and ages of the individual malts used in the blend are important as is the skill of the blender in selecting malt and grain whiskies which are compatible and which together produce a flavour acceptable to millions of people throughout the world.

Last year exports of Scotch whisky earned over £600 million, largely due to the popularity of blended Scotch. This success could never have been achieved by malt whisky alone and before Scotsmen began to blend malt whiskies and grain whiskies their national drink was virtually unknown outside this island.

IAN COOMBS
The Scotch Whisky Association,
17 Half Moon Street, London W1

Bruce Page writes: The Scotch whisky industry, foolishly, has 'conquered the world' by falsifying the nature of its own unique product. Anyone can make grain whisky, anywhere: and more and more competitors are learning to do so. Anyone, also, can learn to trot out that weary old stuff about the presence of a higher proportion of malt not being a guarantee of quality. Why not put the facts on the label and let the public judge for themselves?

Insults galore

Sir, In his report on Anglo-Japanese relations (NS 1 December) Murrary Sayle makes the rather sweeping statement: 'There is, significantly, no equivalent of "Jap" in any other European language'.

I can assure him that German, for one, has the disparaging term 'Japse', which in my view is a pretty close equivalent. And I am informed by a French colleague of the term 'les japs' in his own language, which would seem to have roughly the same connotations as the English 'Jap'.

THOMAS LINDSAY
Simrockstrasse 19
5300 Bonn

Party tricks

Sir, Peter Milne's suggestion that the People's Revolutionary Party in Ghana is the successor to the CPP of Nkrumah (NS 5 January) is totally inaccurate. The members of the old CPP have reformed to found the People's National Party. The PNP leadership includes Imoru Egala and Kojo Botsio, both former foreign ministers under Nkrumah, and they say the PNP will follow the ideas and teachings of Dr Nkrumah. The People's Revolutionary Party, which, as Mr Milne correctly says, has Johnny Hansen as the chairman of its steering committee, is founded on a socialist ideology, as is the PNP, and parallels its policies in many ways. But Mr Hansen's policies in the past have been further to the left than the mainstream CPP. The PRP would seem to be a successor more to the PPP, also founded by Mr Hansen, which was proscribed and prevented from contesting the 1969 elections.

Mr Milne writes that 'if the CPP campaigns on a Broad Left ticket . . .the election could be a one-horse race'. I would ask on what evidence he makes such a claim, when the only gauge in recent years, the local council elections, contradicts his belief.

S. F. SUTTON-JONES
54 Cranwich Road
London N16

Wolves and eagles

Sir, Can Kenneth Jennings really be the Senior Lecturer in Animal Ecology at the Biology Department, St Mary's College, Newcastle? If so, then weight has been added to one argument against 'Experts' that 'ex' is a 'has-been' and a 'spurt' is a 'drip under pressure'. In his support of bloodsports (NS 22 and 29 December) he puts forward the view that foxes were originally preyed upon by wolves and eagles and that as these predators have now been removed, then hunting with hounds is the best method of 'control' because it is 'closest to the natural process' and is selective.

While I accept that occasionally an eagle may have taken the odd cub or two I wonder how Mr Jennings has come to the conclusion that wolves chased foxes to exhaustion and killed them? A fox knows every earth and hole in its area and if hunted or frightened will dive quickly down such a refuge. The only reason Man and his hounds can hunt a fox to exhaustion is because a man known as an earth-stopper is paid to block all known earths, holes and drains the night before the hunt thus ensuring that the fox cannot find refuge and is forced to do what does not come naturally – run until it drops. If a fox does manage to find an unblocked hole then often the huntsman will 'evict' it with terriers so that it is forced to run again or he will have the fox dug out and killed.

Mr Jennings also has a strange view of the diet of the fox. He claims that a major prey of the fox is rabbits and hares. Any decent naturalist knows that a fox will eat whatever comes easiest – fruit, worms, voles, rats and carrion all feature much more significantly in the diet of the average fox. Post-mortem evidence in this country has shown that foxes rarely take viable lambs and that most lambs taken by foxes are still-born. Consequently the Ministry of Agriculture consider the problem of lamb-killing by foxes so insignificant that they do not even bother to keep statistics whereas they do keep records of sheep and lambs killed by stray dogs.

Because hounds cannot tell the difference between male, female, young, old, barren or pregnant foxes, then foxhunting cannot be selective. Because foxes have never been a prey animal, no form of control devised by Man can be 'natural'. The fox population is best controlled by the fox itself – in the way that Nature has intended. This is by the availability of suitable environment and food supply. It is the widely accepted fact (amongst true naturalists at least) that animal populations are controlled by available food and suitable breeding conditions – not by predators, whether they are human or animal.

JOHN BRYANT
Fern House,
Warnbrook, Somerset

Peter Finch

Sir, I am completing a biography of Peter Finch and I am interested in any letters, photographs and information pertaining to him during his last ten years 1967 to 1977. All letters and photographs will be returned to the sender.

ELAINE DUNDY
570 Kings Road,
London SW6

CORRECTION: In Reuben Ainsztein's recent article on Soviet anti-semitism the date of V. Polezhayev's article in *Komsomolskaya Pravda* should have been 13 September, not 13 November.

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FIRST PERSON
Arthur Marshall

Many a slip

Those of us who dwell, and very happily, in smallish villages seem to find life a good bit easier to live than those in large towns. And there is one great advantage. Information about worrying events in the big world outside penetrates only with difficulty into our cosy little closed community, so much more agreeable and friendly than a closed shop. And thus it was that, jolted into alertness the other day by a wireless announcement, listened to with half an ear, as usual, while doing something else, and misheard into the bargain, to the effect that 'the Vickers Works are at a standstill', this grievous if inaccurate news signified to me one thing only, namely that our delightful Vicar was having alimentary canal misfortunes of the sluggish kind so well known to many of us who are on the wrong side of fifty, misfortunes crying loudly out for prunes.

The bread strike, a resounding flop if ever there was one, meant nothing at all to us in this district. Panic buying is not, anyhow, a pastime that our sedate shoppers much go in for here and I secured my every-other-day uncut Hovis without difficulty. My Cousin Madge, who runs a bigger establishment and is in addition a generous purveyor of crumbs to wild birds during the winter months, got her daily large white medium-slice with no trouble. Is there perhaps a quite simple explanation of the strike's failure? It must be fairly odious to have to construct a motor-car (ceaseless din, smells, oil, metal, and chains clanking in a manner all too reminiscent of a chain gang), but on the other hand everything about the construction of bread is a delight – the sense of purpose that is so basic and goes back for centuries, the warm ambience, the white-dressed workers, the pliant dough heaving and rising and rich with promise, the oven doors clanging to, and then finally the enormously pleasing sight and aroma of the finished product, loaf upon loaf and roll upon roll. Hey-presto simply isn't in it. Can it be that most of the bakers just didn't *want* to stop?

But life in our beautiful Devonian backwater does have one very small personal disadvantage. Having had recently to renew my passport, and having wondered yet again where on earth the last few years have flashed away to, I found myself ordered, as usual, to supply information about 'profession'. I have explained before how my careless printing in capital letters of the word WRITER led to my being thought to be a WAITER, a profession which apparently is not very highly regarded at frontiers. So this time, a proudly non-retired person as the bouncy and bulging happy snap reveals, I have put 'journalist' instead, and for journalists the contented warp and woof of placid country life provides few of the exciting matters that sell newspapers. I think it was Molière, less well known as Jean Baptiste Poquelin, who said (and I have there made use of the transparently dishonest phrasing of writers who have just scurried to their Oxford Dictionary of Quotations and looked the thing up) that he took his *bien* where he could *trouver* it, by which he meant, I suppose, that he pinched and grabbed material from all over. And so say all of us and in this connection I must tell you of a strange and exhilarating experience that came my way a few weeks ago.

You see me, I dare say, and you would be right, as a slow-moving figure of ponderous build. Though time was when no Cambridge under-graduate's bicycle wheels revolved faster than mine (not, as I have confessed, on my way to lectures or stimulating chats about Goethe, but simply on my daily progress from cinema to Fuller's and back to cinema), this devil-may-care motion has long been denied me. It was therefore with some surprise that I found myself a month or so ago in the drivers' cab of a High Speed Train and progressing westwards from Paddington at a speed of precisely 125 m.p.h., the limit currently allowed. How so, you ask, shaking your head in bewilderment? Well, I had written in a popular London evening paper (the one that isn't the equally popular *Evening News*) about childhood ambitions and I stated that, although to be an engine driver was never one of them, I would now, in the markedly improved drivers' conditions and with an unrivalled view of the track ahead, quite enjoy it, though perhaps the authorities might, in their prudent way, consider me a pinch too old. Officials in British Rail chanced to see what I had written and, utterly on the alert, kindly arranged for me, courteously escorted, to make this exciting trip.

I was not, let me hasten to assure anxious travellers, permitted at any point to handle the controls but there I was, perched up in the co-driver's seat and the cynosure of all eyes as we shot past Ealing and zoomed through Slough, by which time I had stopped worrying whether the signal men had got the points right. I had given some little thought about suitable togs for the outing. I had decided not to strike too dashing a note and to go in for something practical and so I just put on my normal London anti-mugging kit (oldish blue macintosh, faded brown bags and a rather disagreeable grey tweed cap) that is intended to make me merge anonymously into the background, but even then I thought that I caught some startled, not to say apprehensive, looks from intending passengers on the platform as we pulled into Reading. We went as far as Bristol and returned in the same fashion and I have seldom enjoyed anything more. Describing all this in my customary rich prose, I ended by saying what fun it must be to fly to America in the cockpit of a Concorde. But it begins to look as though nobody in British Airways reads the evening papers.

It was all another world and it is invariably fascinating to find oneself in such a one and with its inhabitants leading lives that seem so very extraordinary and remote from one's own. Details of another different world and one into which I can now never hope to penetrate have, sent by a kind reader, reached me in the shape of a page from the 'Ice and Roller Skate Magazine', recording recent sensational happenings in the skate world (the page sent to me must, I think, though I am very far from sure, refer solely to the ice rather than the roller sphere). Reports of skating demonstrations and competitions are frequent, and delightful technical terms are everywhere. For example, special praise is lavished, and obviously deservedly, on 'a spin combination presented by Sheridan Maxwell. It was a side lay-back descending into a broken leg'. Restrain your sympathetic gasps of horror. A 'broken leg' here would seem to be a sort of graceful dipping motion and broken legs are mentioned all over the shop. Not that life on the rink is always entirely trouble-free and one is aghast to read that while Mark Reed was dancing with Wendy Sessions, 'his trouser strap came undone in the first sequence', which was almost certainly the cause of their mistake in the step 'in which he does a drag while she stands'. And one's heart goes out to Sharon Hunt, tipped to take the lead in the 'school figures', who missed her centre in the right inside rockers, wrecked her confidence and confessed that she was shaking like a leaf when the moment came for her right back inside loops. But how very plucky to carry straight on. Angela Brazil's heroines live again.

It all sounds enormously enjoyable and the names alone kindle the imagination – Dawn Peckett, Vicki Wylde, Heather Bytheway and Jayne Newby. Stephanie Thorne, a skater of brilliance, unfortunately 'over-rotated her double lutz, didn't try a double axel, had several muffed landings and finished sixth', all of them things that might happen to anybody. There is, locally, ice as I write and it is all I can do not to dash out, pop on skates, and tackle that tricky 'change-foot camel', go into my double axel and on to my double toe loop and then attempt, of all things, a 'triple salchow'. My Cousin Madge, a great skater in her day, might be coaxed out to join me in a dance number performed by Miss Sessions and Mr Reed: 'it included a circle back upon themselves and a step in which, while she was going forwards and he backwards, they both leant backwards to look at the ceiling' or, in our case, the sky. My only fear is that Madge may get over-excited and over-rotate and muff her landings.

Roger Woddis

What is right

'It can be a pitiless weapon, and against this pitilessness Christians must protest.' – The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Donald Coggan.

Those who labour should be humble,
Workers should be workmanlike;
It is sometimes right to grumble,
It is always wrong to strike.

Marvel, brothers, when the Primate
Makes the shallow seem profound,
One eye on the current climate,
One ear to the middle ground.

Hear a voice expressing pity
For the helpless and the old,
Somewhat muted if the City
Should exert a stranglehold.

Damning strikers as destroyers,
Men of conscience must protest –
Keeping in with your employers
Dulce et decorum est.

He who crawls upon his belly
Serves the nation as a whole;
He who says, 'Not on your nelly'
Loses his eternal soul.

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BOOKS IN GENERAL

Neal Ascherson

Grey Granite

Socialist Propaganda in the 20th-Century British Novel by DAVID SMITH *Macmillan* £8.95

David Smith starts and ends his book by contemplating one of Orwell's sourest lines: 'If one faces facts, one must admit that nearly everything describable as Socialist literature is dull, tasteless and bad.' It's tempting to lay into that sentence right away; the resentful self-doubt masked by aggression still reeks in 'If one faces facts', in the use of 'one' rather than the first person, in 'nearly' and the cop-out 'describable as'. (At least the word 'arguably' wasn't in critical circulation then.) But 'dull, tasteless and bad' does unfortunately apply to a great deal of the writing which David Smith presents.

His own approach is to look for literary quality. For a critic who writes as a socialist, that was not the only possible way to attack the subject. A novel written to instil socialism in its readers could also be judged by its success as propaganda, and some would still do so. Think of the unforgettable scene in Doris Lessing's *The Golden Notebook*, in which the communist literary committee listens to a reading of a pathetic fantasy in which an ordinary working man visits Moscow and is asked round by Uncle Joe – that little window in the Kremlin still glowing when lesser men have long since gone to sleep – to get his views on the real situation of the struggle in Britain and how the CPSU should act towards it. After the reading, there is a heavy silence of embarrassment until 'George', the pipe-smoking proletarian writer from the Thirties, pronounces: 'Good, honest, basic stuff.'

Bad, even awful – 'George' was implying – but it might get across to the average working chap. It would have been a bonus if Smith had explored this thought a little. My impression is that political persuasiveness has indeed been related to quality. *The Ragged-Trousered Philanthropists* has been going from hand to hand and making committed socialists for generations. Lewis Grassic Gibbon's *A Scots Quair* went about plebeian Scottish society in the same way for nearly 40 years, although it sent many of its readers into the SNP rather than towards a marxist political commitment. What about the fiction of the indefatigable Jack Lindsay, though, who has been turning out propaganda novels since the Thirties without reaching great literary heights (on the whole: David Smith finds much to admire in *1649*, his pre-war novel about the Diggers and Levellers, and in one or two of the works written in the immediate post-1945 years)? How influential has he been among the masses, and what was the response of readers to James Welsh, James Barke, Len Doherty? It's too cosy to assume that middle-class critic and working-class reader are naturally of one mind.

Mr Smith is concerned with the problem he puts concisely when discussing James Barke's *Land of the Leal*, which is still widely read in Scotland, if not elsewhere.

> For a while it seems he has partially solved the propagandist's problem: the natural and artistic development of the political message. Communism comes in response to the oft-repeated question-mark posed by the figures of Jean and David: 'What is the point of our lives?'

He is talking about the difficulty of fitting any credible psychological development of British characters to the socialist transformation of society in the future. This is a narrower, and infinitely harder, test for the writer than a novel of social protest.

The Ragged-Trousered Philanthropists is the first landmark, published in 1914 but in its complete version not until 1955. Smith salutes the desperate passion of 'Robert Tressell' over the wasted lives of his Hastings house-painters, his humour (short in supply among socialist fiction), and his 'sense of work': his unstrained realism in describing the feelings, tools, experience of manual labour. He concludes that *The Ragged-Trousered Philanthropists* absorbed 'more than any British novel before or since . . . its author's socialism on the level of myth or legend'. This is oddly put, but I think Smith is saying that Tressell alone has cracked the problem of making the urge to a socialist commitment emerge as a 'natural and artistic development' from psychologically convincing fiction.

But Tressell, as a working-class writer (his daughter now insists that he was of aristocratic descent, but we know very little about him), was utterly unusual in his time. Much of this book is occupied by the relationship of middle-class novelists to socialist propaganda, and Mr Smith doesn't find much to praise. The central difficulty, all too English, was that the middle class simply did not know what being working class was like. It was a difficulty they could try to carry by storm, to dissolve with tearful self-abasement or just to dodge. Storm Jameson said sensibly that the thing was to go and find out, but few did so and neither – according to Mr Smith – did she. Rex Warner and Edward Upward tried to circumvent the problem by writing political fantasies (*The Wild Goose Chase* and *Journey to the Border*). C. Day Lewis stuck to what he knew: the introspection of the young bourgeois intellectual shivering on the diving-board of politics. Countless bourgeois characters were made to symbolise the crossing of the class canyon by being popped into bed with a richly-alive proletarian. (This trashy old device is still in use, I'm sorry to say. It's a version of the frog-to-prince myth. Real life suggests that the ceremony more usually ends with the proletarian princess turning into a frog.)

Inevitably, the definition of a 'socialist propaganda' novel is arbitrary, and many readers may disagree with David Smith's choice. He throws out, instantly and with relish, both *Animal Farm* and *1984*, although Orwell apparently intended the former to be propaganda for social democracy. Smith is right, however, in saying that the overwhelming effect of both books has been to suggest that all forms of socialism lead to Gulag or worse. It's harder to understand why he selected *Retreat to Innocence* (1956) from Doris Lessing's work. It does not stand so separately from her other novels, and – as David Smith admits – she is far too 'aware of human limitations' to be classified as a propagandist.

In a gloomy chapter entitled 'Blighted Spring', Smith describes the decline of overt socialist commitment in British fiction after about 1939. Is this, then, a failed experiment? The rarity of revolutionary consciousness in the British masses and the cultural division between classes gave it little chance. You can describe the early stages of awakening understanding, then you must resort to wild feats of projection to imagine this understanding at a mature and revolutionary stage.

For Smith, only Tressell and Lewis Grassic Gibbon succeed. He gives a whole chapter to Gibbon, and *A Scots Quair* has been soaring in critical estimation ever since it was 'rediscovered' (in London) and televised in Scotland in this decade. The three component novels, *Sunset Song*, *Cloud Howe* and *Grey Granite*, form a dialectical triad: the disintegration of the ancient peasantry of Mearns, the cruel and senseless years of struggle in a small town, finally the emergence in the city of a united, determined proletariat. The ideology emerges naturally, in the first two volumes at least, from the marvellously-told experience of the peasant woman Chris and from Gibbon's own device of 'the speak' – narration through the gossip of the people, rendered in a cunningly diluted vernacular. The trouble has always been the third volume, *Grey Granite*.

It's the same old problem. The future hasn't happened. Gibbon, himself son of a poor Mearns farmer, knew all about Scots country people. When he transfers them to an industrial city – and tries to show their matchless

Christopher Reid

Looking Down on the Rich

Stacks of money, the red rock-face
was Arizona's commonplace.

Day after day, the sun patrolled
a Xanadu of crumbling gold:

a zillionaire like Scrooge McDuck ...
Flying to Vegas, there we struck

what seemed, to foreign eyes, to be
some occult empire of ennui.

Time and again, the ball of fate
ricocheted through thirty-eight

points of the mystic compass. Dice
master-minded our sacrifice,

while madmen rummaged blackjack-cards
for alchemy. Like palace-guards,

the one-arm bandits kept saluting,
or sounded off in spates of shooting,

as visiting generals looked impressed
by the medals that swivel on a manly chest.

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contentiousness and capacity to squabble melted down in the heat of capitalist crisis to the steel monolith of a revolutionary class – his imagination weakens. David Smith mounts a brave defence of *Grey Granite*, admitting its flaws but claiming (convincingly) that it is still better than most of the other novels he has been analysing.

In a fascinating essay on *A Scots Quair* in the current *History Workshop*, Ian Carter suggests that in *Grey Granite* Gibbon realises that his synthesis of socialism and Scottish nationalism will not hold, and that this is the source of weakness. David Smith, on the other hand, reads in the end of *Grey Granite* a message that even communism is not the end of history. Chris returns to her hills, her son Ewan marches south with the workers. Gibbon won't leave the last word with the cities, so there can be no last word in history at all. Carter calls this 'the ultimate cop-out', but Smith, I think, is on surer ground.

Hermione Lee

Address Book

The Journals and Letters of Fanny Burney Vol. VII: 1812-14 edited by Edward A. Bloom and Lillian D. Bloom *Oxford* £22

1752 to 1840 is no mean lifespan, and suggests extraordinary possibilities for a literary observer. Fanny Burney was born two years before Fielding's death, outlived the society of Johnson, Reynolds and Burke, and passed through the Romantic period, to die in the year of Hardy's birth, the year of *The Old Curiosity Shop*, Browning's *Sordello* and Carlyle's *On Heroes and Hero-Worship*. Even a select list of what was published in England for the years 1812 to 1814 is impressive: *Waverley*, *Pride and Prejudice*, *Mansfield Park*, *The Excursion*, Cantos 1 and 2 of *Childe Harold*, *The Giaour*, *The Bride of Abydos*, and *Queen Mab*.

Yet the 60-year-old Fanny D'Arblay's literary references are few. She speaks of meeting Rogers and Mrs Barbauld, of reading Mme de Stael's *De l'Allemagne*, of being confused with the novelist Charlotte Smith by a dotty Irish Baroness who then screamed and 'jumped about the room quite crazily'. She considers using Maria Edgeworth's publishers, and she recalls fondly Johnson's and Burke's praise of her early novels. But the most talked-about new poems and novels seem to have entirely passed her by: and this in spite of the fact that there are references to her reading Jeffrey in the *Edinburgh Quarterly* (who would have been reviewing Byron, for instance, in 1812) and that her father Charles Burney had given *Lyrical Ballads* an intelligent review in 1799.

Perhaps these blanks are due to her ten years in France, or perhaps to her nostalgia for the vanished literary age to which *Evelina* belonged, or to her preoccupation with family and court affairs. In any case, the volume would be a disappointment to those in search of a literary survey; but it makes up for this by its presentation of an interesting moment in Anglo-French history, and by the conflict it

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reveals between Fanny's allegiance to her husband and to her son.

When she came back to England in 1812 to see her family and to give her son Alexander an English education, she left her husband employed under Napoleon as a civil servant – a painful position for both of them. Her financial state was not very bright, and the difficulties of communication with France were severe. Tender, florid love letters between the aging couple cross, or get lost, in the post: 'Adieu ma chere et adorable amie, toi que j'aime davantage a tous les instans' . . . 'Ah, mon ami, si vous saviez comme – depuis quelque tems – vous occupez TOUTE mon Ame!' The correspondence is touching, but it also gives a good sense of how tensely the outcome of the war was awaited, and how much sympathy there was in England for the Bourbon monarchy.

Fanny's account of her presentation to Louis XVIII in April 1814, before his return to France, in Grillon's fashionable hotel in Albemarle Street, is the high point of the volume (though it dwells rather lengthily on the king's praise of her books), with its details of the terrible crush ('There was neither going up, nor coming down'), the king's entrance ('moved along slowly, slowly, slowly, rather dragging his large & weak limbs than walking') and the moribund court at dinner:

> All there was nearly dead silence; excess of exertion, & of fatigue . . . having so completely overpowered their strength & spirits, that sleep, heavy sleep, seemed fastening upon their Eyelids.

After the Restoration the D'Arblays' problems continued. Having hoped to be appointed French Consul in England, General D'Arblay had to be satisfied with a commission in the Duc de Luxembourg's company, part of Louis XVIII's household troops (an 'aristocratic but unpopular organisation', as the editors explain in a characteristically succinct and helpful footnote, 'despised by the professional militarists and laughed at by all but the most committed royalists'). D'Arblay wanted Fanny to return with their son and for him to have a military career in France, not – as she intended – for him to become an English clergyman. This pressure exacerbated Fanny's problems with Alex, who seems to have been the victim of an overwhelmingly managing mother. The letters in which she contrives for his election to a scholarship at Cambridge are masterpieces of string-pulling in high places. But his subsequent peccadilloes – his time-wasting addiction to chess games, his carelessness and over-confidence about exams, his unfortunate neglect of the classics in favour of algebra – are continual grounds for complaint. Though he is 'ardent', and promises reform, she feels she can't leave him and go back to France. He needs constant supervision – she has even considered moving to Cambridge, but 'he has made me think such a measure would expose him to ridicule'. As for military service – 'he has never mounted a Horse, & daily he grows more near sighted'. No wonder that Alex D'Arblay professed 'a mortal dislike to all GIRLS' and never married, dying childless (a clergyman and not a General) three years before his mother.

The unresolved dilemma about Alex and the separation from D'Arblay are central to this volume, but other concerns press in: her own health, never recovered since a 17-minute operation in 1811 for the removal of a lump in the left breast; her 88-year-old father's death, after a long period of gloomy suffering, and the ensuing sale of his great collection of music and music-books (these to the British Museum) during which it was discovered that, because his library had not been catalogued, less than 5,000 books remained out of a collection of 20,000. Charles Burney's will created dissatisfaction in some branches of the large Burney 'tribe', which Fanny had to smooth over, while her own financial difficulties and sense of homelessness were increased by the forced sale of the country retreat built by D'Arblay, Camilla Cottage. And, though her novel, *The Wanderer*, was finished, and the first edition sold out three days before its publication by Longmans, the reviews were bad: Hazlitt attacked it for feebleness in the *Edinburgh Review*, and there was disappointment at its discreet avoidance of any *exposé* of life in France under Napoleon. Fanny tried not to be disheartened ('I do not fret myself, I thank Heaven, about the Reviews') but her critics were right. Unlike the much earlier and much better *Evelina*, *The Wanderer* has sunk into well-deserved obscurity.

For all this, the predominant tone of the letters is unrelentingly active and, indeed, complacent. What makes them of interest as literary as well as historical documents is Fanny Burney's novelistic aptitude for different modes of address, from the romantic language used for smoothing ruffled feelings ('Ah my dear Mary! – shall MISCONCEPTION – false judgment – undermine a confidence which I thought would have lasted while I last?') to the jokey, affable family manner ('But – put on a Wig! That will warm the dear brains, & keep them clear & vigorous. And you cannot be a BISHOP without one: & it will look *de bon augure* – Besides – I have news for you that would lift it up!') or the unctuous effusiveness of the letters to court:

> How grateful are my feelings to Providence that once more – after a chasm of 11 Years, it is allowed me to join my small, but true voice . . . to the general Chorus of prayers, of benedictions, & of warm wishes, upon the return of Her Majesty's Natal Day!

Though the letters do not provide a window on to the literature of the period, they are a very good index of its language.

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Morris Fraser

How to Die

The Hospice Movement by SANDOL STODDARD *Cape* £5.95

It is possible that the hospice ideal – the provision in hospitals and the community of a service devoted to the care of the dying – will be seen as medicine's greatest advance during the second half of this century. This may seem an extravagant hope in a day of multiple transplants, laser surgery and kidneys-by-Concorde, but the hospice is without doubt the only area of progress that truly affects medicine's every branch and sub-speciality. 'Having passed through a phase of extraordinary success,' the psychiatrist C. Murray Parkes has said, 'we are faced with the unalterable conclusion that, no matter how we try, 100 per cent of people still die.' Over 1,000 American colleges now offer courses in 'death education'; in Israel, where the topic is rather more immediately relevant, it has been experimentally introduced into the curricula of some junior schools.

Much of this new sensitivity to the needs of the dying patient comes from the pioneering educative work of Dr Cecily Saunders at St Christopher's Hospice in Sydenham, founded in 1967. Hospice and home-based care for the terminally ill is based on a recognition that the fear of dying is largely a two-fold fear of pain that might be unendurable, and of being alone at the last. Rationally, the hospice couples highly refined systems of pain control by drug combinations, laboriously worked out over the years, with the immense humanity and dedication of a professional team that supports an individual or family through the experience of dying or bereavement. But it would take more than a paragraph or two to do justice to the long and honourable history of the hospice; also, it would take a far better book than Ms Stoddard's. The best one can say about it is that it is amiably written, prettily put together, and that the author's heart is manifestly in the right place in her abundant concern for a sadly ignored group of people. The worst is that she is completely out of her professional depth: she makes the highly trained professional staff of whom she writes appear as muddle-headed and superficial in their approach as she is.

Perhaps a persistent reader could endure the long and pointless anecdotes, the interminable low-budget first-feature information

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('structures of steel and glass stand where sheep and cows once grazed') and the bewildering lurches from an imagined past to an equally imagined present, then back again. Or a reader with a strong stomach could possibly bear with the writer while she remembers, at length, a few of her favourite things – tall blue-eyed doctors, quietly laughing nurses, pathetically grateful old ladies, and rooms 'filled with roses'. These, and stuff like 'She pours a cup of cool water for him . . . looking with her young-old face and her smiling eyes deep into his own' could pass muster (just) if the general picture were accurate and helpful. But, time and again, some important piece of information or discussion appears to be forthcoming only for the writer to trail away yet again into self-indulgent romanticising. The book's omissions, for its length, are vast. One would want to read about the movement's many pioneers, what manner of people they were, about the doubts, the learning-by-failure, the opposition, the triumphs. One would want to know about the slow waxing and waning of the hospice ideal in the past rather than to read a hotch-potch of scattered facts and sheer speculation. Again, I can find virtually no mention of home and community care, no real case-histories, and no examples of the way a hospice team struggles to maintain the integrity of a family before and after bereavement. What of the children of a dying parent, or the care of children who are themselves terminally ill? All these are prime concerns of hospice staff.

The book's second major defect lies in its perpetuation of some extremely dubious antitheses. On the one hand, the large, uncaring hospital where – a mischievous generalisation, this – the old person is 'wheeled to the end of the hall, and there forgotten'. And, on the other, the saccharine images of the hospice mingled with those of a lost Disneyland of the past, of the 'doctor, kind and gentle, reading Shakespeare to his children by candlelight'. Yes, even with those of the 'good old days' when, says the credulous Ms Stoddard, the Victorians covered their piano legs for decency.

My admiration for the hospice and the values it represents is immense; no one can deny that, as our hospital service becomes more technocratic and overburdened by demand, we have lost some of the courtesies of the past. In places there are vast wells of insensitivity; in the last few weeks I have been on a ward round where the consultant managed not to address a single patient ('How is she feeling today, Sister?') and visited a psychiatric unit where depressed patients were given an hour's compulsory dancing every day. But these stick in the mind as exceptions. In the much-abused 'medical factories' I have over and over again found human warmth and understanding equal to, and often beyond, that which exists in some of the alternatives. I have an impression that this is the case more often now than in the fairly recent past, and it is likely that diffusion of new values from the growing hospice movement is partly responsible. Ms Stoddard is at fault in so readily dismissing the possibility of a marriage between the hospital and the hospice-based professionals. In at least one large London hospital where I have been privileged to work, meetings between the medical and nursing staff and the terminal-care teams were a regular feature of the week, and very rewarding they were too. The hospice movement, says Ms Stoddard, is no passing fad – and she is right – but a hospice movement that failed to communicate any of its ideals to mainstream medical practice would be just that.

Anthony Quinton

The Less Deceived

Lying: Moral Choice in Public and Private Life
by SISSELA BOK *Harvester Press* £6.50

Until I read Sissela Bok's admirable book I was unaware of the acute need that there is for it and for comparable books which, to the best of my knowledge, have not yet been written. Where does one go to find thoughtful, serious, thoroughly and relevantly informed discussion of moral issues? In a particular personal crisis one would assist one's own reflections with guidance from friends. But they may be short of time or appropriate knowledge. Like oneself they may never have thought very carefully about the issue in question. There is a place for consideration of moral topics in a general, objective and methodical manner, to be used, not only or mainly in situations of immediate crisis, but between whiles, to improve one's capacity as moral agent and critic.

Traditionally, of course, this was work for the clergy and they still carry it out with various degrees of tentativeness. But for most reflective people their views on morality have no intrinsic authority any more and are quite properly suspect as being distorted by an institutional commitment. More helpful, perhaps, are imaginative writers, but only in an indirect way, by revealing unconsidered possibilities of circumstance and conduct. There are writers who have some measure of affinity to the French *moralistes* but that is not a term that can be translated with typographical literalness. Where they go beyond the clever chatter of La Rochefoucauld, they are guides to prudence rather than morality, in the style of Will Rogers, thought-a-day bathroom calendars and gnomic brown-and-yellow ashtrays obtained in Devonshire.

There is, I am afraid, little help to be gained from those philosophers who occupy themselves with morality. This is not just because of their tendency to preoccupy themselves with the subject at a level of the highest possible abstraction, a weakness Ms Bok mentions. For nearly all of them until very recently it has been an article of faith that their responsibility is not to get involved in moral debate but to analyse the language or thought in which it is carried on. There are exceptions, like Rashdall at the beginning of the century and, more

"The Spencers have thatched their damn bird table."

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recently, Richard Robinson with his splendid *An Atheist's Values*. But over the past decade moral dissatisfaction with American politics has led many moral philosophers there back to something like the involvement in first-order moral thinking carried on by John Stuart Mill.

Ms Bok is part of this movement of thought, as a teacher of medical ethics at Harvard Medical School and as the holder of an advanced degree in philosophy from Harvard. Fortunately she has not let that connection with formal philosophy tie her down to the cautious manoeuvres from which members of the profession seem unable to extricate themselves, perhaps because she started as a psychologist. At any rate she gets to the point and stays there throughout, immune to the temptations that beckon her on the way to deviate into unproductive philosophical luxuriation. Her starting-point is one that only a fool or member of a debating society would question: that unlike truth-telling, lying always needs to be justified. She does not blindly assume the correctness of this principle. But her arguments for it – that lying corrupts the liar and undermines general trust and that dupes feel wronged – have a rather supplementary character. The primary point, surely, is that it is seldom less advantageous to believe what is true than what is false, so the initial probability is that lies will harm those who are deceived by them.

Against St Augustine and Kant, she argues that sometimes lying is justifiable, but much less often than is usually supposed. A reasonable consideration she adduces is that force is commonly regarded as legitimate in response to some kinds of attack and that lying, which is sometimes an alternative to force, is preferable to it. If those who would proscribe lying absolutely are wrong, it must be justified, where it can be, by its consequences. Ms Bok is very nimble at this point in keeping clear of pointless philosophical entanglements. She sensibly supposes that a reasonable consensus can be approximated to in many cases as to the comparative goodness and badness of the consequences of action and does not try to find a universally applicable criterion nor claim that there is a mathematically infallible mode of calculation available in this domain. Some lies are trivial, but even they can usually be avoided by discreet silence or subject-changing. Furthermore, she points out that things commonly thought of as white lies are not all that trivial, for example the use of placebos in medicine or the writing of inflated letters of recommendation.

She settles down to detailed consideration of a magnificently encyclopaedic array of deceptions armed with three tests of justifiability: is the lie one to which there is no non-deceptive alternative; what moral reasons are there for telling it (in other words, how good *are* its consequences); would reasonable people be willing to be lied to in the way in question? These tests are applied to social lies, flattery, excuses, entertaining embroidery of the facts, the kindly evasion of painful truths about ties and acne; to the use of unmarked cars and decoys by the police; to games of deception like poker; to that old philosophical sweetheart, the murderer who rushes in lethally armed, crying, 'Where is Smith, I intend to kill him'; to people trying to survive in plagues or invasions or under persecution by church, state or Mafia, to avoid military service, to get a divorce where adultery is the only cause allowed; to the shared fantasies of unattractive couples (elegantly illustrated with Shakespeare's 138th sonnet); to the planners of D-Day; to the confidence-keeping of priests and doctors, the protection by professionals of their incompetent, even dangerous, colleagues, the connivance by lawyers in the lies of their clients; to devaluation, to Roosevelt's conduct before America entered the second world war, to Milgram's experiments on obedient aggression, to the insertion of spurious patients into questionable hospitals, to advertisements, bargaining and so on and so on.

Because it is often so convenient to lie, Ms Bok is always anxious to argue, where possible, that there are alternatives to it; because it is so easy to lie, she emphasises our readiness to neglect all but its most obvious and advantageous consequences. Many telling and relevant distinctions are drawn. In the same spirit as her distinction of lying from silence is another between lying and the telling of stories known to be fictional. She convincingly argues that much social lying that is ostensibly concerned to spare the feelings of the dupe is really motivated by a desire to avoid the pain of upsetting him. Of particular dexterity is her point that it is one true and defensible thing to say that a liar has forfeited the right to be told the truth, quite another to say that one he has lied to is under no obligation to tell him the truth, for others are involved.

It would be absurd to criticise a book as readably brief as this, but nevertheless so packed with solid material, for incompleteness. Ms Bok knows that she has left some loose ends – for example, that of determining what makes a group of people *reasonable* in forming a court of appeal in the third part of her test. But I do not think it is necessary for her to describe lying as a form of coercion (which it no more is than 'bad housing is violence') to make the use she wants to of the comparison between lying and the use of force. This book is serious to the hither edge of solemnity but a joke from Mark Twain she lets in conveys her main message in a nutshell: 'When in doubt tell the truth. It will confound your enemies and astound your friends.'

Robert Musil

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Jokers Wild

The Comic Hero by ROBERT M. TORRANCE
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The problem is this. We can all put down jokers. Aristotle, from the start, put them down as low, trivial, knavish fellows. Yet the Aristophanic, Quixotic, Rabelaisian, Falstaffian comic (to name only his most exalted ancestry) remains a more challenging figure today than his longtime serious, or 'tragic', rival. For it is not protagonists for whom we instinctively pine so much as antagonists. It is not a divine chaos that now threatens us so much as the ever-encroaching restraint of social uniformity and control. It is not heroic champions that we seem to need so much as comic champions, or 'Lords of Misrule'.

Mikhail Bakhtin, in *Rabelais and his World,* provided a key; and despite one allusion to this great Soviet semiologist and theoretician (whose works are still not all available in translation) I wish Robert M. Torrance had followed his lead more closely than that of his Harvard mentors. For the clown goes masked. The final steps of that reckless trail to role-switching and transvestism are missing. The joker's role here is merely exuberant: with a defiant festivity 'forever extemporising his essence'. Or as Felix Krull wrote, on deciding to reject Lord Strathbogie's offer to make him his heir (in return for services rendered):

> The main thing was that a confident instinct within me rebelled against a form of reality that was simply handed to me and was in addition sloppy – rebelled in favour of free play and dreams, self-created and self-sufficient, dependent, that is, only on imagination.

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The very anarchy of such 'revels' is that of 'rebels'. Even the words, as Torrance fails to note, are cognate.

Yet his own language veers constantly to metaphors of war. His joker is an unconscious (Freudian) or conscious liberator, challenging a 'hostile world' with a 'potential or actual antagonism'. His stratagems are 'subversive', indulging a 'belligerent selfhood' in the face of 'constraint'. For the essence of his freedom, as Felix Krull also observed, is 'to live like a soldier but not as a soldier, figuratively but not literally, to be allowed in short to live symbolically'. In defence of his animal drives the joker seeks a symbolic retreat, readily and universally identified with totems: with the Birds of Aristophanes or a Golden Ass, with foxy Reynard, Coyote or Brer Rabbit, Woody Woodpecker or Bugs Bunny.

Yet challenge inevitably makes for confrontation. The Aristophanic '*komos*' resolved the preceding '*agon*'; but in all later Hellenic and Roman comedy, society triumphed over the dissenter as scapegoat and butt. '*Castigat ridendo mores*' became the motto. Theatres were turned into social workshops for correction and self-correction. Playwrights, from Jonson to Molière, resigned themselves to serving as society's censors. But what of the rogues who bravely persevered by consciously accepting, even initiating, the risk of ultimate annihilation? This is the line, celebrated by Torrance in *The Comic Hero*, whose protective deity is Hermes, whose epic progenitor is Odysseus. More recently it stretches to embrace Huckleberry Finn, Leopold Bloom, Felix Krull, Charlie Chaplin and (in our own day) Randle Patrick McMurphy: artful dodgers all, man and boy, outwitting an alien world with their duplicity, inscrutability and guile. Such are the resourceful saviours of earth's sane and loving communion.

What Torrance overlooks, however, are further minorities of tricksters, further cycles of deviance that, in every other respect, resemble his heroes: Joe Orton's black comedies, for example, or the assorted pimps and thieves of Jean Genet. In an otherwise eminently safe and academic book, the homosexual rogue as comic hero might have made an interesting contribution. Who else persists with such 'wilful adherence to the truth of his own invention', or – put more festively – with such defiance to his own phallic rituals? What could be more reminiscent of the *persona* of Quentin Crisp, as enacted in *The Naked Civil Servant*, than this concluding description?

> He is most completely a hero when most intentionally comic, and at the peak of his prowess is audaciously conscious both of the ridicule he provokes and of the challenge he poses. Although the odds are always against him he never shrinks from the contest, and by the countless contrivances of wit and imagination he most often emerges not as the victim of fate but as the virtuoso of fortune.

Perhaps that is why homosexual themes pervade our comedy shows. What would our funny men do without them? Perhaps that is why drag shows prove as compulsive to women as to men. For the comic heroine (with the possible exception of Lysistrata, or the Wife of Bath, or Agnès in *L'Ecole des femmes*) was once a contradiction in terms. A woman simply could not transgress male society with impunity. Her challenge was not comic, or festive, but catastrophic. Like Hester in *The Scarlet Letter*, she had to be outcast as a moral leper; for she threatened the very foundations of society. The scope for female heroism, within the wilder antics of Women's Lib, is one of the more joyful phenomena of our age. Germaine Greer, Rita Mae Brown and Bette Midler are only the first to have seized a whole new explosive range of comic opportunities. For apart from madams of bawdy houses, pandering to men's needs, there have been no *Ladies* of Misrule. Nor has laughter at women, in the past, defused male scorn. To this day, the grace of laughter is no automatic sanction for the social clowning of women.

Under a totalitarian regime, comedy, so far as it is permitted to emerge at all from the knockabout farce of the circus, can only revert to a neo-classical insistence on social decorum. Only the bureaucratic establishment is right-thinking; it alone can sponsor the rules. Communist *virtus*, like that of ancient Rome or Israel, enforces the strictest subordination to clan, or party, or God – 'requires in effect the selfless extinction of personality'. Torrance adds: 'To such spartan austerity no comic counterpart is conceivable unless by denial of its very foundations.' Even Plato's Socrates could tolerate no lies, except by the rulers 'for the public good'. Laughter he could not tolerate at all.

In medieval terms the joker was naturally identified with Satan, the foxiest arch-trickster of them all. Until Cervantes turned the tables. His knight errant rode out of the Golden Age as Christ-like liberator of the oppressed. With that great revolution of comic perspective Jesus himself could be envisaged as a sublime picaro. Don Quixote's progeny abroad, however, was made of weaker stuff. Fielding's Parson Adams is a mere wandering relic from the Garden of Eden who somehow missed news of the Fall; he fathered generations of British innocents, in his absent-minded way, from Uncle Toby to Pickwick, Wodehouse to Waugh. It was left to an Irishman to transfigure the Jew as comic prophet:

> And they beheld Him even Him, ben Bloom Elijah, amid clouds of angels ascend to the glory of the brightness at an angle of forty-five degrees over Donohoe's in Little Green Street like a shot off a shovel.

Though the ultimate paradox, that of a comic Messiah, is necessarily Catholic: the martyrdom by lobotomy of Randy Patrick McMurphy with electrodes like 'a crown of silver thorns over the graphite at his temples'.

'Once a society has lost its self-confident sense of purpose,' Torrance comments, 'it makes a mockery precisely of those who most truly embody its deepest values, and its legitimate heroes, in consequence, must be comic.' But the word 'hero' needs to be stretched to fit this social inversion. Of the good soldier Schweik he writes: 'In a world dedicated to mechanical slaughter he contrives – what accomplishment could be more heroic? – to remain not only alive but fully human and even miraculously sane.' Or again: 'His very modesty, his cheerful capacity to shrug off indignity and partake of the common lot of man in the fullness of its inexplicable absurdity, is one thing that makes him so sympathetic – and so essential – a hero.' But archetypal heroes tend neither to be fully human, nor to remain alive, nor under pressure (like Lear and Oedipus and even Don Quixote) to remain necessarily sane. Most clowns are not our champions exactly; or if, like Don Quixote and his heirs, they seem to intervene on our behalf, they remain (with very few exceptions) continually and sublimely ineffective. Their gestures tend rather to be anti-social, their trickiness performed not for the rest of aberrant society, but wholly for themselves. *Sauve qui peut.* We may recall that even Odysseus failed 'to rescue his companions'.

'Comedy', as A. W. Schlegel said as long ago as 1808, 'is the democracy of poetry, and is more inclined even to the confusion of anarchy than to any circumscription of the general liberty of its mental powers and purposes . . .' If we view these comedians as heroes, then, it is only because – in this technologically, socially, existentially absurd world, where the Joker is trumps – it is on their destinies that ours depend. Their ordeals and triumphs seem to hold out the only promise of our survival.

Norman Douglas

SOUTH WIND

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Blake Morrison

The Wise Womb

The Fight for Manod by RAYMOND WILLIAMS *Chatto* £5.50
Passenger by THOMAS KENEALLY *Collins* £5.25
Short Stories: Five Decades by IRWIN SHAW *Cape* £5.95

It has always been difficult to decide how seriously to treat Raymond Williams's fiction. As a critic his reputation is secure: already he is beginning to replace Leavis as a major influence on the shaping of English studies in this country (not to mention the study of television and popular culture). But most readers have been unable to feel more than lukewarm about Williams's novels. Though too earnest and ambitious to be dismissed as an academic's spare-time activity, the three novels published so far aren't generally seen as key contributions to the Williams canon. The French, it is sometimes claimed, no longer believe critics to be a subsidiary breed; but, shaky though the distinction now looks, the British still expect their major authors to be 'imaginative' rather than 'critical', and in such a climate Raymond Williams tends to be granted less significance than he otherwise might be.

The publication of a new novel, *The Fight for Manod,* looks as if it should be an opportunity to set the record straight, for it completes the trilogy that began with *Border Country* (1960) and *Second Generation* (1964), and thus puts Williams's main fictional achievement squarely before us. We meet many of the same characters again – among them Matthew Price from the first novel, and Peter Owen and Robert Lane from the second. We encounter familiar themes – Wales, the village community, political conscience. We are even thrown back on the earlier novels for an understanding of certain references: without them we wouldn't know, for example, why Peter's mother calls him a 'bastard' for having visited Rose. Yet despite all this, the trilogy hardly seems a trilogy – and for a simple reason: the Williams who wrote its first two parts is not the Williams who wrote the third. The presiding spirit of the earlier fiction was (in Terry Eagleton's phrase) 'Left-Leavisism', its conventions those of Lawrence and the Fifties provincial novel. But since then Williams has wrestled with the European marxist tradition, developing a sterner understanding of political power. Though there is a line of continuity in his sympathetic attention to ordinary work and lives (a tractor accident, a sister's resentment of her brother's girl-friend), the new novel is trimmer, more austere, reminiscent in places of a tightly written thriller.

Williams is also the author of *The Country and the City* (1973), a book which looked forward to a reconciliation of the country/city divorce. In *The Fight for Manod* Matthew Price seems to have written a similar book, and is appointed to look into the possibility of building an experimental city in mid-Wales – 'a city settling into its country'. Matthew has faith in the scheme, but when a number of local land deals are made, he and his colleague Peter Owen become suspicious, and eventually trace them back to an international capitalist conglomerate. Now Matthew and Peter must decide whether the government plan is worth supporting. Is Peter right in seeing it as 'an organised rip-off for an oil company subsidiary and a merchant bank'? Or is it still, as Matthew believes, a valuable opportunity to bring life to a depressed area? Williams leaves the question hanging, but the weight of his sympathy seems to lie with Matthew.

Thomas Keneally's fictions are widely travelled: medieval Normandy, an 18th-century penal colony in the South Pacific, France in 1918, the Antarctic (twice) – you name it, they've been there. *Passenger* happens in the most exotic place of all: 'I sat in the black duchy of the amnion. Through the blood vessels of the placenta I took bounties from my mother's body – oxygens, minerals, carbohydrates.' This is no ordinary pregnancy: as the result of a pre-natal laser beam test, the foetus-narrator has been triggered into early consciousness, and has a precociously clear vision of the outside world. It's the Romantic idea of insightful childhood pushed one step further – the wise womb – and it makes for an old-fashioned omniscient narrative: the wide-awake foetus can see for miles and miles. His overview, though, is not exactly one of fingernail-paring detachment, for our unborn hero is threatened with the knives of abortion.

Problems begin when his journalist-father Brian is sent off to cover the Middle East War. Brian finds other women hard to resist (we've already seen him 'humping a cadet from the *Express* on the bonnet of a white Renault 10'), and it's no real surprise when he arrives home in London with a bony reporter called Annie Newman and gives his wife Sal the push. Brian, who has not told Annie about his impending fatherhood, wants the pregnancy terminated; Sal does not, and takes refuge in the house of the Gnome, an obsessive middle-aged orphan who has been following her for months because he believes that she is his mother and that the child she is due to give birth to is, well, in a way, *him* (Sal can't quite work it out either but, as a Celt, she's always had a soft spot for craziness). Under the Gnome's protection Sal escapes to Australia where, among other things, she is saved from drowning by a surfer whose vocabulary is limited to the reassurance 'That's cool'. But all the time ill-intentioned Brian is hot in pursuit, and the threat persists that communications between narrator and reader will be severed.

It may not be Keneally's best novel (*The Chant of Jimmy Blacksmith* takes some beating) but it's his wittiest and most inventive. So strong and original is the narrative voice that he manages to work in a great deal – the foetus's Oedipus complex, the Gnome's shady business dealing, extracts from Sal's novel – without letting the main events lose their grip. And though it's not anti-abortionist in intention – the foetus is careful to stress that it's only his own life he wants to save – Keneally's lyrical responsiveness to the womb, with its 'rich lakes of wild and plentiful cilia, of browsing bacteria, of hearty corpuscles and of those flabbergasting denizens, the chromosomes', makes *Passenger* a quietly effective little protection campaign for the unborn child.

'Writing is an intellectual contact sport, similar in some respects to football', Irwin Shaw tells us in the introduction to *Short Stories: Five Decades*. The plain man's analogy is typical of Shaw, a way of guaranteeing his oneness with the common reader. It's a way, too, of smuggling a larger-than-life subject matter past sceptical eyes: whenever the Hollywoodisms of his stories raise our suspicions – the men with lightning fists and fat wallets, the women with high, full breasts, the passions, the agony, the dream – there's always Shaw's reassuringly homely voice telling you that life really is like that, only you hadn't noticed. This familiar middlebrow pose is made all the more convincing by Shaw's direct and accessible prose (he's an author whose 800-page novels can be read in two hours). The sporting analogy isn't just a put-on, however: it says something about the preoccupation with competition, play and games that characterises this collection of 63 short stories. A mediocre businessman, stunned and outdone by his powerhouse *literati* wife, remembers how he once ran 80 yards on the football field; two friends fight over whether Jack Dempsey would have beaten Joe Louis; a weekend tennis enthusiast plays a lustful game of mixed doubles; a football star gets injured and learns to think. Most of the stories have this straight-down-the-line snappiness about them, and though they rarely aspire to anything as grand as insight, they're competently told. One gripe: since the title and introduction make so much of their documentary interest (they move from the slump through to Vietnam), why couldn't the stories have been dated?

This English

An enjoyable gaggle this week: two misapposition cocktails, a bungled cliché, a cloth-ear and a fine example of compositorial mischief. £3 for the first entry, £2 for the others printed. Paste entries on a postcard, if you would, and please be precise in your attributions.

☐ The Brewers Society has been investigating the presence of nitrosamines, which may cause cancer in beer since August after being notified of German tests. **Alison Beckett** *Daily Telegraph* (Siasp Kotavala)

☐ John Bindon, a television actor, was seriously knifed in a Fulham drinking club before a man he is alleged to have killed received his fatal wounds and was lucky to be alive, his solicitor, Mr Anthony Blok said yesterday. *Daily Telegraph* (Gill Marx)

☐ Mr Hunter claimed that he had got rid of only old moth-eared works of fiction – romances, cowboys, and crime thrillers. *Scotsman* (David Browning)

☐ Mrs Sharp said that she had been seeking her roots for some time, but has found nothing concrete. *International Herald Tribune* (Mavis Gallant)

☐ Pope John Jaul's Christmas message to his former diocese of Krakow, was censured by Polish authorities and their a Roman Catholic, newspaper refused to print the cut version . . . they censored the message to the Krakow diocese to delete all references to St Stanislav, the country's patrol saint, who was martyred in Krakow in 1079. *Daily Telegraph* (J. Brew)

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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

David Harsent

Open Nerves

Mary Barnes *Royal Court*
Anchorman *Royal Court Upstairs*
Da *Greenwich*

Back in the Sixties – Golden Days before they palled – radicalism, seriousness and fashionable success seemed, at times, to be inseparables. A good deal was heard then about radical psychiatry, mostly from R. D. Laing, the movement's principal apologist and theorist. Laing rejected the traditional therapies, especially for patients labelled schizophrenic, claiming that the illness should be viewed in Existential terms and that the use of ECT and drugs to 'cure' patients was barbaric. It seemed then – it seems now – that Laing had something important and humane to say, despite his adoption by the trend-setters and T-shirt manufacturers.

Mary Barnes was one of the first patients to live in Kingsley Hall, a house, set up on Laingian principles, where those diagnosed schizophrenic could journey through the illness that afflicted them without being trammelled by traditional treatments. David Edgar's play gives us that journey, beginning with Mary's arrival in the house symbolically corseted into her nurse's uniform, through hysteria, violence, delusion and a regression to childhood, and ending with a kind of rebirth. She is not necessarily a comfortable person to be with by the time the play ends – not placid, not assured – but she is no longer tortured and no longer tortures others.

Some notion of the credo behind that transformation is, of course, essential to the play though David Edgar's method in attempting to solve that dramatic problem leads to some lumpily didactic moments as the psychiatrists living in the house swap well-wrought anecdotes that point up the idiocy of official attitudes and educate the audience in the internal logic of madness. These tiny essays, delivered over a dinner table or before and after a moment of crisis, have the effect of mannered asides. The audience is well aware that it is being lectured; and if Mary is on stage then she is there not as a character, but as an example. Such scenes, ironically, have the flavour of the kind of horrific seminars Laing often reviled, when patients would be wheeled on before a student audience to provide practical instances of the lecturer's topic.

However, Edgar is anxious that we see the shrinks as human, vulnerable and uncertain – anxious to make it clear that Mary is being accompanied on her journey, not simply pointed in the right direction and waved off. To this end, he has organised an effective counterpoint between their own nervous tension and occasional anger – coming at times when the extremity of Mary's behaviour transmits a defensive fury to one or more of them – and the casual, efficient, compassionate and inventive manner in which they more usually cope with her blood-curdling, manic outbursts. During these latter passages, the doctors have about them the cool but dedicated air of people dealing with a situation familiar to them, but none the less dangerous for that. It's a nicely drawn point; but it does serve to illustrate what I took to be one of the play's major drawbacks. There is a distinct vaudeville aspect in madness: its postures, its indignities, its bizarre verbal connections. In life, and at close-quarters, such behavioural fractures are indescribably chilling. On stage, they tend to get laughs; indeed, they invariably *did* get laughs. At times, it appears that Edgar is almost assisting his audience in this defence. When Mary confronts two of the shrinks, naked and covered from neck to knee in her own excrement, Eddie – her principal helper – is allowed to resort to drollery, thereby taking the heat out of the action.

A similar kind of fault lies in the play's attempts to present, in pursuit of its argument, too many examples, too episodically, over too long an evening. With the appearance of Angie, a middle-aged victim of maternal smothering, much of the tension drains away. As compensation, though – and in fairness – the introduction of Mary's brother, Simon, heralds a passage of considerable power. Simon is a man crushed by drugs, gripped by compulsion neuroses, and wrestling, it seems, with a sinister deference to his own affliction. The part is played with admirable precision and great sensitivity by David Gant; and here Edgar produces a cleverly-organised device for demonstrating the fact that Mary, by showing compassion for her brother, has emerged from the terrifying single-mindedness that characterised her illness.

It is an incisive and subtle moment in a play that, for the most part, makes little use of inference. The actors, though, rarely take the opportunity for a gratuitous flourish or indulgent stridency. Simon Callow plays Eddie with a bearish, sometimes savage, ebullience; and Hugo – the Laing figure – is portrayed, cleverly, as a frosty *éminence grise* by Donald Sumpter. Mary, though, is our focal point: raving, sly, vicious, deluded, desperate, she rants and punches and wails her way through madness to a kind of health, painting the walls with her own excrement, having to be bottle-fed, dumping her hysterical anguish on anyone and everyone with brutal randomness. It's a demanding part – not least for being easily overdone. Patti Love takes it at full pitch most of the way, keening and shrieking in a demented voice that now and then weakens to admit a plaintive tone. The level and the progression are undeniably well-sustained and the depiction of madness forcefully done; at times it seems that her nerve-endings will bristle through the skin; but such intensity can scarcely be effective over three long acts.

Upstairs at the Royal Court a different kind of revolution is going on. Britain is in the throes of a military coup, the rebellious population is discovering the connection between power and gun-muzzles, and euphemistically named 'interrogation centres' exist for the education of the disloyal. We learn all this from the exchange between the play's four main characters – all soldiers – who have been seconded to a mysterious outfit called No 15 Special Task Force (West-Mids). There is Skinner, a lean-lipped faggot with a switchblade; Plug, a tough-minded Black with a switchblade; Brady, a nervous 'Technic', without switchblade or balls; and Stachan, a demoted officer anxious to ingratiate himself with the 'grunts' – the working soldiers.

Quentin Thomas's set – depicting a barrack-room – resembles nothing so much as a steel boxing-ring: as well it might, since the four spend most of the play shaping up to one another, trading insults and arguing about who will take on the role of anchorman, the figure of authority without whom they feel edgy and insecure. Their one exercise, to put down a rebellion in Brum, takes Plug and Strachan on to a rooftop where they capture a girl; and for a moment there is a promise of rape to liven things up. But no – Plug's better instincts overcome him and Ron Hutchinson's windy, directionless, doggedly obscene dialogue continues unchecked, with moral issues rising like flares and paradigms sticking out like sore points.

Given its subject, one of the play's more remarkable aspects is its almost complete lack of a sense of oppressiveness or impending disaster. The shadowy 'they' – those in power – of whom the characters speak with awe and loathing, are never made to seem anything more than – well – shadowy; certainly never a puissant force lurking in the wings; and the kink-in-the-tail ending is as predictable as the rhythmic cursing. The CVI Company get through as well as can be expected.

Da brings us back to families and family pressures, maddening, though not severe enough to induce madness. The play has had something of a chequered history, having been first staged at the King's Head some years ago, then rejected by London managements and taken to America, where it picked up a few awards. Now revived at the Greenwich Theatre, it offers an undemanding, intermittently amusing evening which is, I'm sure, less than Hugh Leonard intended.

Charlie, a mildly successful writer, has come home to the Auld Sod for his foster-father's funeral. The Da was a wily, ignorant, exasperating old bugger, servile in the face of authority, tyrannical in his conformity and blind to the fact that his life was pointless and without dignity. Charlie is, naturally, obsessed by him, and the obsession calls up ghosts – the Da himself, Charlie's foster-mother and Charlie as a young man, together with other figures who represent failure or humiliation or loss.

Whether they are enacting remembered events, shredding the gift of hindsight, or arguing the toss in the interstices between the two, Charlie and his shades rarely miss an opportunity to interlard the action with the kind of frothy Irish wit that advertises itself as Frothy Irish Wit. It's a large target and Leonard scores as many hits in the inner ring as there are complete misses. Eamon Kelly, as Da, skips and postures while skilfully delivering the best lines in the play; and Kevin Moore as Oliver, Charlie's timid childhood friend who has grown to a mature, pussy-whipped gutlessness, turns in a couple of impeccable vignettes.

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Television

Julian Barnes

Fatboy

'What new law have they invented to replace happiness?' moaned the etiolated daughter of an old Czarist general during Isaac Babel's *Marya* (BBC-1), while a cello played by a dispossessed prince mourned from the next room. And what new law can they invent to stop Russian plays from always sounding like parodies of Russian plays? 'What are we – men or animals?'; 'It's time for your medicine, Uncle'; 'All the people want is today's news'; and the curtain-line, 'I think babies born tomorrow are going to have a marvellous time'. Despite an overlay of Revolutionary lust and violence, for much of its stretch Babel's play sounded like flat Chekhov: the offstage clatter of gunfire replaced the distant chop-chop of the cherry orchard, but its dramatic function remained the same. Decent members of the propertied class bewailed their lack of understanding of the peasants. There was even the standard tired, grumpy old nanny sleeping in the corner of the set who looked like (and may even have been, since the *Radio Times* didn't show its face this week) Wilfred Hyde White.

Perhaps one was expecting too much alchemy from the combination of Christopher Hampton as adaptor and Jack Gold as director. Babel's only play hasn't ever been staged in the Soviet Union – presumably on the usual grounds of its Jewish authorship, insecure ideology and indirect reference to the Cheka – but the theatrical commissars there could probably make out a decent aesthetic case against it if they wanted to. It is a structural mess, vaguely threaded together by the constantly invoked absence of favourite sister Marya, who naturally never arrives. At the end, under the cover of 'revolutionary chaos', the main characters simply disappear, most of them while offstage. It all, moreover, seemed a long way from the 'savagely satirical portrait' of the early years of the Russian Revolution which the BBC had been promising; or was it being played too naturalistically in its fine, plush set? What attention it held was largely thanks to the acting of Lisa Harrow and Clive Revill: he as the Jewish racketeer who employs cripples to smuggle for him (they were less likely to be searched), she as the general's daughter selling herself as slowly as possible. In the best scene, where he tries to seduce her, she fended off his paddling paws while setting up a defensive smokescreen of witter: Revill, listening and watching, built his face into a startlingly perfect balance of boredom and lust. I haven't seen a better 10 seconds of acting for months.

There's doubtless a plausible logic behind the irredeemably jaunty presentation of the *Our People* series on immigrants. Not enough viewers, the Thames moguls presumably argued, would stay tuned to a programme about immigrants (i.e. black immigrants) unless it were tricked out with snatches of song from the Tom Robinson band and graphs which kept going *piiing* and *zoooom* and *whaaa* as they uncoiled from the bottom of the screen. Still, beneath the electronic noises, the first episode was smart and useful, highlighting some seamy little abuses of police and bureaucratic power. Random raids on Bangladeshi restaurants in a 'search' for illegal immigrants; random police demands for ID in the street; slapping Arab transit passengers at Heathrow, despite their onward reservations and London hotel bookings, into the local detention centre – these were some of the more startling examples. And did you know that under the immigration acts a suspected person, detained on the order of a civil servant, can be held without charge and without being brought before a magistrate for periods of time which may extend up to a year?

A slightly calming footnote on race relations could be found in the unlikely location of *Match of the Day* (BBC-1): in the testimony of WBA's Brendan Batson, Cyrille Regis and Laurie Cunningham that the booing of blacks from the terraces has declined recently. I well remember the occasion a few years ago when the *MOD* cameras paid one of their rare visits to my own scandalously neglected team, Leicester City. It was an away game, and soul-scarring jeers greeted every touch of the ball by our black teenage winger with the ironically super-Brit name of Winston White. His career hasn't exactly flourished subsequently. Clyde Best, of course, was also more or less howled – and hacked – out of the game: howled all the way to the States. Maybe the WBA supporters' chant of 'One Cyrille Regis, there's only one Cyrille Regis', fitted beautifully to the tune of *Guantanamera*, offers some minor reassurance.

If Russell Davies can bear a bit more poaching, the damp-eye slot of the week was *The Superstars* (BBC-1). The first heat of the new series was contested by plumply past-it sporting heroes – cigarette-card maestri all the way back to Roger Becker and John Charles (why, incidentally, hasn't he punched an interviewer by now for the ritual intro, 'Well, John Charles, the Gentle Giant, what ...'). The camera panned nostalgically over the barren tundra of Brian Close's dome, then shifted to Bobby Charlton's single lank shank as it wandered lost and lonely across his temple of thought – and we were suddenly reminded of the prize for which these two super-baldies were competing: of all things, the Brylcreem Trophy. (So where was Denis Compton?)

As each puffing fatboy collapsed out of his kayak, plopped from the parallel bars, and staggered off the steeplechase course, Ron Pickering – no faun himself (I wouldn't mind seeing him do a 400 metres hurdles with David Vine) – poked a mike into his face and demanded patronisingly, 'The legs are still there, Bob, aren't they?' It wasn't, however, quite as unpleasant as the performance of the returning *Parkinson* (BBC-1) this week. Parky's constant verbal lechery has always seemed designed to point out 1) that he himself is 'a man who loves the company of beautiful women', as he frequently puts it; and 2) that his guests are all rampaging heterosexual Stakhanovites as well. (His appalling *Sunday Times* cricketing ad – 'Never mind, Mr Parkinson, perhaps you'll score later' – has been noted in these columns before.) From the way he likes to ask, 'Did anyone ever pick you for a wrong 'un?' (he asks it usually of people with a safe track record, like Richard Burton), you conclude that Parky would be happiest in a world where all homosexuals labelled themselves as identifiably as Quentin Crisp. One imagines that his research team has been recruited from that Australian philosophy department featured in *Monty Python* where all the lecturers are called Bruce and wear cork-bobbled hats: 50 per cent of their departmental rules, you may recall, are the same rule: 'No Poofdahs.'

This week, Parky contrived to get in his ritual crack – when Ray Reardon explained how he had worn white gloves at the pit-face to protect his snooker hands, Parky snickered, 'They must have thought you were a right wrong 'un' – but he also managed a slice of his more usual lunkhead chauvinism. As Edward Fox chatted normally to Britt Ekland, Parky leaned over and, in the voice of a man who spills beer down your suit, nudge-nudged, 'I think you're going to score'. Miss Ekland, sadly, seemed only flattered. Finally, he closed the show with a self-deprecating reference to Fox's olde-Englishe charm: 'I sit here talking my usual rubbish and he sits there quietly and pulls the woman.' Still, as long as someone – some man, that is – gets lucky, I shouldn't think Parky minds occasionally taking a back seat.

Sport

Russell Davies

Body Checks

I am always gratified when Altrincham FC grub up their morsel of Cup notoriety, because it means I regret a little less the many damp brown afternoons I invested in, years ago, at their Moss Lane ground. Not that it was such a bad ground; there must be worse in the Fourth Division – and in fact my local Div. II ground today (which boasts an 'Allotment End') is in many corrugated iron respects alarmingly similar. But at Altrincham one was depressed, in any case, not so much by the Cheshire League (later Northern Premier League) facilities as by the guilty knowledge that for a bit of extra effort – a quarter-of-an-hour on the electric suburban train, plus a brisk walk – one might have spent the afternoon watching *real* football at Old Trafford, something I rarely roused myself to do. We at Moss Lane felt very much the stragglers in football's great march onward. We didn't see many celebrities. Noel White and Peter Swales, now chairmen of Altrincham FC and Manchester City respectively, and letting everybody know it, kept the local music shop then, particularly well stocked with EPs.

So the one place in town where one could see 'sporting' stars cheaply, in unforgettable flesh, was the Stamford Hall, where they put the wrestling on. I haven't thought much about wrestling from those days to these; but now that an official Report has reached me from the IBA, offering to define 'The Role of Wrestling as a Public Spectacle', I am compelled to re-evaluate the experience. Yet I can't really imagine, now, why I went. Possibly I was charmed a little by an incident that occurred on one of the first visits to the Stamford Hall, when I rolled up straight from school carrying some football togs in a hold-all and was snatched aside by an eager commis-

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sionaire. 'You know where it is, don't you?' he whispered urgently, motioning me away down a long dank corridor barred to the public. It remained the only time I have been taken for a professional sportsman.

This should have been a sobering experience, actually, considering the kind of predators this liveried Nero wanted to cast me among: Count Bartelli (of Crewe), pledged to unmask if ever he was beaten; Jumping Jim Hussey, an amazingly agile super-heavy pug with the face and physique of a giant dwarf, and an incredibly bad temper; and Hassan Ali Bey, a vast moustachioed Turk, specialist in bear hugs, whose reputation died hard with me even when it was revealed that he was employed part-time by the uncle of a schoolfriend of mine, and went, in daylight hours, by the comparatively non-Ottoman name of Mr Dawson.

It was the anger of these men that survived disbelief and was fearsome; for, as anger grew, one could see them overcome by the terrible desire to wreak (or, as Tony Gubba will repeatedly have it in *Grandstand*, 'eek') upon the opponent their own special, personal act of torture. (I forget what Count Bartelli's was; I think he was just horribly uncouth.) It was exhilarating and shameful to see this evil ritually released – which certainly casts the whole event into a nasty masturbatory glow, although I must say I don't remember seeing a single physique I recall as troublingly attractive. I got back-stage only once, as a member of a four-man fanfare team recruited from the local brass-band to put a bit of bezazz into the top bout of the evening, the final of the regional tournament. In the event, the fanfare was a spluttering mess, the crowd laughed heartily, and we hid in the dressing rooms where some wrestlers fortunately unconcerned with the bezazzful final were having an argument. This at least helped to confirm that there is aggression of some kind in the game, though my glowing embarrassment after the fanfare prevented my taking in the substance of the quarrel. However, I was particularly impressed by one of the participants, a six-foot-three-inch stack of liniment, supposedly Russian, called Paul something, not a word of whose boomings could I understand. Certainly he was inarticulate with either rage or foreignness.

The IBA document strongly suggests that the Authority is well on the way to a wholesale redefinition of Mr Dawson's little hobby. A covering letter from Dr Mallory Wober, Deputy Head of the Research Department, hints that ITV's Saturday afternoon grapple is now an embarrassment to them in their efforts to match the BBC as providers of genuine sporting coverage. 'It may turn out to be more appropriate for all concerned,' writes Dr Wober,

> if wrestling was presented on television as entertainment rather than where it is now. I do not feel too strongly about it myself; however, that is where the available logic of critical and public opinion would seem to direct it.

The available logic, as presented in the Report's statistical analysis, is perhaps somewhat misleadingly hard-headed, since it has been culled from the responses of adult Londoners, who traditionally make up one of the most self-consciously knowing and sceptical portions of our population. No flies on them. Hence 'Only about 10 per cent of our London adult sample claimed a strong interest' in wrestling. And 'among those who are frequent viewers of TV wrestling, the commonest reason acknowledged for seeing it (by nine out of ten people) is that it is funny and amusing'. A cagey public this, not to be fooled: 'nearly three-quarters of the whole sample considered that results of matches are fixed, at least sometimes. Only 4 per cent . . . thought that results were never fixed.' And, along with scepticism, distinct stirrings of a sophisticated frankness: 'one in three of frequent viewers say they watch because they have some sensuous pleasure in the spectacle.' Bully for them. However, bracketed with this observation is another, namely that 'one in seven give as a reason that it is good to see bad people getting punished. These reasons emerge principally from the older patrons of the spectacle.' And would emerge, I'd bet, far more strongly if soundings were made in further-flung parts of the country where older values prevail. I have veteran relatives in Wales who take a decidedly Old Testament view of the Saturday tea-time histrionics. Perhaps there is a case for letting Kent Walton loose in the Sunday god-slot.

In its 'Discussion' section, the Report presses home its case against the seriousness of wrestling with notable ease: 'the referee often misses infringements (which are performed extremely clearly when his attention is elsewhere)' . . . '[an observer] saw Catweazle, after he had failed several times to throw his opponent, knock down the referee; but he picked him up apologising profusely' . . . 'Gay wrestlers touch opponents' and referees' genitalia, making the audience both angry and anxious'. Well, the kind of audience that can be panic-stricken by such emblematic prodding, it strikes me, will not react too badly to the more notional shame of having its weekly treat excised from the World of Sport. So I look forward to the return of the bloom to Dickie Davies's cheeks, after his release from the ensquirming task of fairground-barking to adolescents and old ladies on behalf of Giant Haystacks and Big Daddy.

Music

Andrew Clements

Playing Safe

Diana Kacso *Queen Elizabeth Hall*
Michel Dalberto *Queen Elizabeth Hall*
Debussy: Preludes Book 1 *DG* £4.35

Only two previous winners of the Leeds Piano Competition have gone on to establish international reputations. Radu Lupu (who won in 1969) and Murray Perahia (1972) would both have made an impact without winning at Leeds but no doubt it helped. The other winners have more or less subsided into obscurity. Two out of five isn't perhaps such a poor success rate for a competition that must try to assess something as protean as interpretative quality. Confronted with such a range of technical ability and artistic approach and attempting to balance one quality against the other, judges must be sorely tempted to choose the uncontroversial middle-of-the-road pianist of sound technique and sensible ideas rather than the more exciting, perhaps inconsistent player of real flair and originality.

This certainly happened at Leeds in 1966 when the rather ordinary Rafael Orozco won at the expense of Victoria Postnikova, but the jury has generally made the expected deserving choice. Last year's competition, however, was anything but clear-cut. After the semi-finals the Brazilian Diana Kacso was the favourite, but she wrecked her chance in the final by fluffing the opening of the last movement of the Tchaikovsky First Concerto in spectacular fashion. Michel Dalberto, who had produced elegant, unforced performances throughout the competition, turned in a tasteful version of the Mozart C major Concerto K503 and took first prize. Kacso came second.

Both pianists have since given London recitals. The debuts of Leeds prizewinners are always turned into Special Occasions: the audience is more affluent, less knowledgeable, and noisier, and it must be difficult for any artist to produce his best form under such conditions. I can't believe, for instance, that the thick, undifferentiated tone that Diana Kacso produced is characteristic of her playing; more likely it was a nervous reaction, the consequence of over-pedalling for fear of a technical breakdown. This lack of tonal variation spoilt the Villa-Lobos prelude that opened her programme, but elsewhere the quality of her musical personality intermittently showed through, particularly in an intelligent account of Beethoven's A major Sonata Op. 101, a work full of technical and interpretative pitfalls for the unsuspecting.

If Kacso's gifts remain enigmatic, the impressive qualities of Dalberto's playing are always on display. It is fastidious, beautifully phrased and articulated, a textbook example of the best a French conservatoire training can manufacture. His performances of Mozart and Schubert are full of surface elegance, yet make no attempt to probe beneath that surface, and in repertoire that demands more than the classical virtues this limitation is devastating. Prokofiev's *Sarcasms* are acerbic miniatures, savagely ironic, but Dalberto's delicate inflections castrated them. And while a group of Scriabin miniatures was ideally suited to his approach, it was disconcerting to hear the same composer's Ninth Sonata so purged of its sensuality and cumulative tension and replaced by an anonymous, unspecific sensibility, the emotional *lingua franca* that sees him through any kind of imaginative problem. It makes for a characterless art. Dalberto's playing promises very much, yet the emotional development it needs is considerable. I'd like to think it was his potential that impressed the Leeds judges.

The most convincing proof that perfect technique and precisely calculated performances need not imply artistic sterility is Arturo Benedetti Michelangeli. Michelangeli's recordings are almost as rare as his concert appearances and equally unpredictable, but in some parts of the repertoire he is without rival. An earlier disc of Debussy's *Images* and *Children's Corner Suite* defied criticism, and if his new version of the first book of Preludes is not quite so incontrovertible, it is only because the music itself is more problematic, more elusive. The essence of Michelangeli's approach is romantic, a constant flux of subtle rubato and tonal nuance. The opening of 'La fille aux cheveux de lin' is extraordinary for its purity of line; 'Ce qu'a vu le vent d'Ouest' is a remarkable display of

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tonal clarity and power. And 'Des pas sur la neige' is the gem of the set, a superb justification of Michelangeli's slow tempi and demonstration of his complete identification with the Debussyan idiom. Buy this even if you buy no other record of piano music this year.

Films

John Coleman

King's Indian

The Chess Players (A) *Academy One*
Blue Collar (X) *Gate Two*
Damnation Alley (A) *Rialto*
Thunder and Lightning (A) *Rialto*
Seeing in the Dark *ICA*

The great Indian director Satyajit Ray has officially opened out: hitherto, his films were made in Bengali, and thus guaranteed a minimal home audience; now he has done one in Hindi and it turns out to be just about his most exotic work to date.

> He's a man of such wide sympathies, such a gentle, shy person with so many levels – artist, musician, scholar and all the rest – that it's almost frightening . . . Ray is very much a man of nuance. Everything he does is toned by a musician's ear.

The quote is from the Spring '77 issue of *Sight and Sound* and was voiced by the splendid actor, Saeed Jaffrey, playing Mir, one of the two principals (the other is the equally excellent Sanjeev Kumar as Mirza) who ought to be marginal characters but are, in fact, the funny, sad, grand and silly obsessives of the title: *The Chess Players*. Ray has gone back in time to 1856, to Lucknow, capital of the state of Oudh, ruled by a fat king with 400 concubines, 29 'temporary' wives, an astonishing propensity for fitting in five prayers a day as well as composing verses and music highly reckoned by his courtiers. Bled almost white by us British, he is finally found regally incompetent by our Lord Dalhousie, who is out to annex Oudh for Queen Victoria and assigns the graceless task to the British Resident, General Outram (Richard Attenborough with a Scots accent and finely rendered complex qualms). The East India Company, of course, lurks behind the naughty, economic dealings.

But the finance and politics of it all are, in Ray's event, very much behind, a sort of backcloth against which he can set his Mir and Mirza compulsively slogging through game after game of chess, eating and hookah-smoking as they play, surrounded by a flutter of servants, leaving their respective wives in a high state of erotic starvation. Mir's lady, Nafeesa (Farida Jalal), compensates by having an affair with a nephew – and there is a lovely, mad scene when the lad is caught half-hiding under the bed and some impromptu nonsense arises about his not wanting to be called to the colours – while the extraordinarily beautiful Khurshid (Shabana Azmi), missus to Mirza, pleads a headache in a desperate attempt to tug her husband from the board (actually a printed piece of cloth) into marital fulfilment: she fails and summons her old nurse to tell her a story, stories, through the dark hours.

There is a kind of Indian equivalent of Arabian Nights, a Sheherazade feel, abroad throughout this quite special film. It has tremendous humour in unexpected places and large pathos – as when the tubby king or Nawab (Amjad Khan) both resigns, and resigns himself, in a long monologue. It would be nice to say that it constantly looks good: unfortunately, one never knows where the colour is going or coming, from cut to cut. But where it looks good, it looks absolutely marvellous: a devoted reconstruction of a weird, garish and yet stylish epoch and of the moustached men, the incredible dancing girls who inhabited it. It entraps a sometimes vulgar, sometimes exquisite radiance, and – most of all – a seductive languor, a posed idleness which one senses as essence of old India.

And it, inevitably, is the basic subject-matter of the event. Ray has permitted himself unusual freedoms (there is even some early animated, send-up material and a voice-over reads the background historical news at intervals): it is rather, on reflection, as if he were trying to incorporate and respectabilise the humdrum hundreds of song-and-dance movies that make up the bulk of the Indian film industry: it is like his early, magnificent *Jalsaghar* or *The Music Room* touched up with sequins and satire. He seems to be saying that there was a fatal softness that it only took the go-getting British to capitalise on, but – at the same time – he is, in the best sense, not taking sides. He reminds one increasingly of that other great master, Jean Renoir, in his capacity for the broad human view, at once tender and acrid. In a little sequence of great craft, Outram interviews the king's mother through a screen, vainly essaying to sort out an affair which had gone beyond him. India, teeming, sagacious, filthy, poverty-stricken and palatial, has a way of out-facing the West. Satyajit Ray, with his chess-players, has found a perfect image for its indolence, its subtle, doomed inertia. Rightly, his Mir and Mirza hold centre stage while squeamish Outram and his accomplices – redcoats and all – enact their bigger, sordid chess game in the wings.

Paul Schrader has done scripts for Martin Scorsese and Brian De Palma; he has written a book on Ozu, Dreyer and Bresson; he has proved himself to be a fairly flexible fellow, in short. Now he has scripted and directed *Blue Collar*, a rough-and-tough first feature of some virtue. Some. Two blacks (Richard Pryor and Yaphet Kotto) and one white (Harvey Keitel) work in a Detroit automobile factory. They are buddies with problems financial. Comes the day when they decide to empty their union's safe. By the skin of the script, they get away – but with a measly $600. The union bosses talk of a $10,000 rip-off and then up it to $20,000. Our trio get peeved, particularly when they realise they also have in their possession a notebook detailing apparently illegal loans made by the union. Now this should clearly be a film about political corruption, a mini-*Fist* if you will. Somehow, it doesn't work out that way. After a decent, shattering overture, which carries over a powerful whiff of the rawness of making motor-cars and the rugged inarticulacy of those so employed (if I heard 'mother-fucker' once, I heard it a thousand times: when will people learn that naturalism is not necessarily natural in the compressed area of a piece of art?), we get a few pretty startling views of Detroit, which would appear to be hell on wheels. Oddly, this is engaging, or – at least – visually arresting.

Then things keep coming together and falling apart. There are good scenes among the robbers in the locker-room and in their favourite tavern (no wonder they're broke) and having a neatly-choreographed orgy: there are some very feeble, sketchy domestic interludes with a daughter wrecking her teeth by trying to make her own brace (Keitel's beer consumption for a week could have bought her a brace of braces, the thought occurred). One of the blacks is picturesquely killed; another sells out by becoming shop steward. Keitel is left looking extremely angry. The story goes that he really was, feeling underparted. Long before the end, all has descended to the sour and melo. But there have been moments.

The Rialto is presumably proposing to close shortly. No other explanation comes readily to mind in confronting their current double bill. *Damnation Alley* proposes the Earth shoved off its axis, if you will excuse the expression, by a nuclear holocaust, through which a mixed group (*this* is what happened to George Peppard, should you have been wondering) move to meet another clutch of survivors. Horrible to gaze at, it is even sillier aurally. And I had been led to believe that there was stuff like fall-out after atomic explosions and it was bad for the skin and so forth. Oh, never mind. Mind even less about *Thunder and Lightning*, which one takes to be something – about moonshiners of all dimensions – that fell out of an exhausted TV set. David Carradine stars and there is one joke somewhere about him and his damned karate. The ICA is currently running an avowedly political season of films, *Seeing in the Dark*, of which I can recommend *Moi, Pierre Rivière* and *England, Home and Beauty* to your attention. Only ignorance prevents me from proposals.

Weekend Competition

No 2549 **Set by Big John**

I was hanging around the offices of the TLS the other day, and encountered a group of literary journalists glumly trying to keep their spirits up with the following game: you have to think up book-titles and authors which rhyme, and which, preferably, make a striking contrast:

> Crome Yellow
> By Saul Bellow . . .

or:

> A Christmas Carol
> By J. G. Farrell . . .

or:

> Lucky Jim
> By Barbara Pym . . .

That bit shouldn't be too difficult, should it? Now we want you to make those two lines serve as the first half of a clerihew, and in the second half describe or comment on the book you have just invented. There are occasions when a book title rhymes with its own author –

> Appointment in Samarra
> By John O'Hara . . .

– and we shall be on the lookout for these. Special marks will also be awarded for those avoiding easily-rhymed authors like Greene and Braine, and tackling instead the likes of

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Yukio Mishima, Buchi Emecheta and R. K. Narayan. Maximum of three entries each; by 2 February.

Result of No 2546 Set by Anne Rundle

We asked for a sonnet whose first 12 lines contained the names of members of the England cricket team (or England or Scotland soccer teams).

Report by Len the Unlucky

Squeezed out again: when do I ever get lucky?
A coroner's apiece, plus an extra Newton to
Fowler for his sensible nonsense. Still one or
two Bisquits left to come, by the way.

What are these twelve, so brave and brearley led
Who bowl so sliply in the hendrick land,
Each with a boycott willow in his hand
And botham all-round-covers on each head?
What do they seek, so randall and so rare?
Why are their pads so catch and taylor made?
What is the point of that great gower blade,
That fiery willis whirling in the air?
An owzat emburey in the outback lurks;
A gulley miller extra matchly works
Beside a glancing gooch, all bumper creased;
A lever prises up a limey feast.
These Mary-bones, so teaming and so true,
Dig for the ashes of a kangaroo.

LAURENCE FOWLER

Has Boycott's joy got tons more fun with runs?
Does Brearley really fear leg-breaks and pains?
Will Miller still the cobbers' pommy-guns?
And how are Gower's powers drained by strains?
Can Randall handle crooks as well as hooks?
Does Gooch screech 'Ooch!' each time he sticks a six in?
Will Botham throw them meatballs when he cooks?
Did writer Willis give us Sergeant Dixon?
Can Lever fetch like some retriever pup?
Does Emburey remember us, d'you think?
Has Edmonds said one slip's when slips slip up?
Is cold Koala-Coca Old's new drink?
Right answers win the Bisquit and a Renault.
The test is closed to Packer, Greig and Benaud.

BILL GREENWELL

Shilton rules! OK? (the world's number one);
Neal is magic; he'll never walk alone.
Thompson is tops – from his arse shines the sun;
Cherry the hard man (with a heart of stone?).
Mills a hundred percenter – the pro's pro;
Kennedy with the educated peg;
Currie, the ex-rebel (world class, you know).
Keegan (Herr Hamburg!) doesn't need to beg.
Coppell, BSc, the team's brainy man;
Latchford, the target, leaps to nod them down.
Wilkins, the midfield poet – watch him scan!
Hughes (Liverpool Reserves), the chirpy clown.
Greenwood, the boss, who mixed the deadly brew –
Hopkins, not in the squad? Knickers to you!

TIM HOPKINS

'Now hear me boy, cottage life is the way.'
I'll ever be glad that I heeded his say.
'You must apprehend, Rick, it's all for your good,
My will is to help you; is that understood?
Life's grand; all around you the air fresh and pure.
I'd go, were I your age, of that I'm quite sure.
Had I had your chances, a miller I'd be,
In an old Downland mill with a view to the sea;
Not a person would make me stay, lord, king or queen,
In this dismal drab rear Leyland strife-riven scene.'
So I gave up the cocktails, the turbot, ham, gin,
To go, O Christ, native, and slough off my sin.
No more balls, that's all over, just bats in the eaves
And the glow of the ashes the burning log leaves.

TED THOMPSON

Rough, that Christmas Quiz, I lacked the info;
'Where are the Banks of Jordan?' – Lloyd's, who cares?
'Name a great Buchan work' – Thirty Nine Stairs.
'– ditto, Kennedy.' – The Constant Nympho.
'Where's Macari's home?' – Er, north of Dartford.
'Name a great twenties jock.' – Steve Donachie.
'Who is McQueen?' – A strong Glen Monarchy.
'Who wrote "Floodgate of the deep heart"?' – Hartford.
'Souness first played?' – Loch Ness, the Southern League.
'How would you mark Dalglish?' – With much fatigue.
' – Counter a Gemmill onslaught?' – *I'd* scarper.
'A player of the harp's called?' – A Harper.
(My skills with fact and sonnet cast a kind
Of gloom. I'm not yet fit for Mastermind.)

GERRY HAMILL

Tony Miles

Chess

No 116 Chinese Chess

One of the most interesting aspects of the Buenos Aires Olympiad was the appearance for the first time of a team representing China. Indeed, to the best of my knowledge no member of the team had played outside Asia previously.

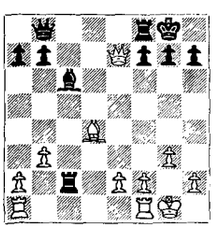
Their star player is Chi Ching Hsuan, who, despite his limited experience, already has some grandmaster scalps to his credit. In the first round of the Olympiad China were paired against Iceland, Chi having Black against Sigurjonsson. One might have expected some nerves. Far from it, he produced a polished professional performance to score a good win.

Though Chi is obviously the best Chinese player the rest of the team is far from weak, and they finished with a creditable 30½ points, one behind England, and only a half behind Yugoslavia.

One of the most entertaining matches of the event came from their board three.

White: Liu Wen Che Black: J H Donner

1.P-K4, P-Q3; 2.P-Q4, N-KB3; 3.N-QB3, P-KN3; 4.B-K2, B-N2; 5.P-KN4!? Evidently White has not read Botterill & Keene. **5... P-KR3** Rather a feeble reaction ... P-B4 or ... N-B3 would be better. **6.P-KR3, P-B4; 7.P-Q5, 0-0?** This is asking for trouble. Black should not commit his king so early. 7 ... P-K3 was better. **8.P-KR4!** This threat of P-N5 is serious. **8... P-K3; 9.P-N5, RPxP; 10.RPxP, N-K1; 11.Q-Q3!** The transferance of the Q to the KR file is hardly subtle, but completely decisive. **11...PxP; 12.NxP, N-QB3; 13.Q-KN3, B-K3; 14.Q-R4, P-B4.** Now comes a beautiful finish. **15.Q-R7ch, K-B2; 16.QxPch! KxQ; 17.B-R5ch, K-R2; 18.B-B7ch, B-R3; 19.P-N6ch! K-N2; 20.BxBch Resigns.**



Problem 116

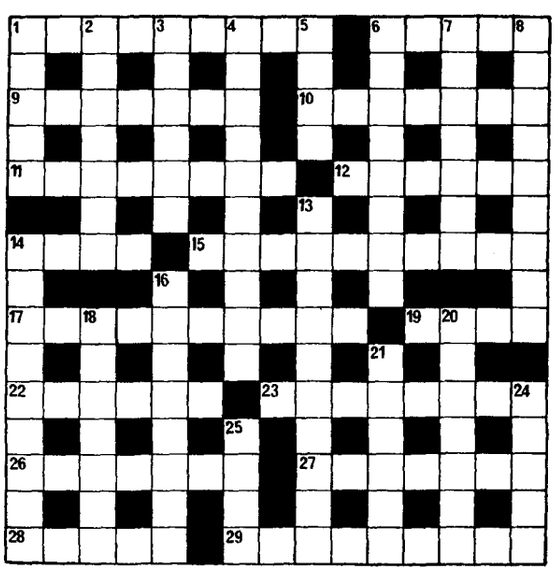
White to play. How should the game go? Answers to me at the NEW STATESMAN, postmarked not later than 31 January.

Solution to Problem 114

White wins by 1.K-B1! RxR; 2.QxR, R-QB1 (or RxP 3.Q-B8ch, N-N1; 4.B-B2! R-B5; 5.B-N3, R-R8ch; 6.K-K2! R-B7ch; 7.K-Q3) 3.K-B2! Q-N6ch; 4.K-K2, Q-R7; 5.Q-N7! R-K1; 6.K-B1 etc.

Weekend Crossword 1290

PRIZES: Book tokens of £2 for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Crossword 1290, New Statesman, Great Turnstile, London WC1V 7HJ, by first post 30 January.



ACROSS

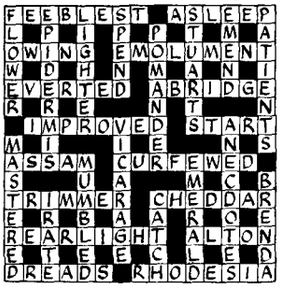
1 Russian official starts putting young lady in deep sleep (9)
6 Decline when penniless go back after penny (5)
9 A friend is without certain backing for study (7)
10 Has the nut ever cracked? It is a risk (7)
11 Rigid EEC as destroyer of sovereignty (8)
12 Try hard although having a free rest about four (6)
14 Got up as a flower (4)
15 A pirate puts back a drink during the game (10)
17 Satisfying advance round defensive position (10)
19 Brought up as a bloody revolutionary (4)
22 Minister needs change of leader to make history (6)
23 Appreciates women who are fools? (8)
26 A stimulating person could make it nicer (7)
27 Is Annie crooked as well as stupid? (7)
28 Part of cow shivered without shed (5)
29 Poet has crest with king in front of it (9)

DOWN

1 Head right for dance (5)
2 Illusions make one lose one's temper in writing (7)
3 Potentially nicest creature (6)
4 United front is adroitly organised (10)
5 Unfinished composer makes one go wild (4)
6 The gift for putting party before country (8)
7 Medical man is included in a circle on worship (7)
8 Promoted although one page got it wrong about the referee (9)
13 What may be played at court dance? (6,4)
14 Prosperous place in France for a statesman (9)
16 The bill is about 50-50 according to the election forecaster (8)
18 One surrounded by reform when threatened (7)
20 Cancel blushing about being caught in wickedness (7)
21 Skill which sets me above the rank (6)
24 Something observed sounds as if it's observed (5)
25 If a man came round, he would be a foreigner (4)

SETSQUARE

Solution to No 1288



Prizewinners to No 1288

George Moor (Burnley)
Barbara Lord (Connecticut)
Mrs D. Thompson (London NW6)

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APPOINTMENTS

Southampton THE UNIVERSITY

DEPARTMENT OF ADULT EDUCATION

Applications are invited for a

LECTURESHIP IN INDUSTRIAL STUDIES

Candidates should be qualified in a field appropriate to the teaching of industrial relations, trade union studies or community education. Experience of teaching adults essential. Salary on scale £3,883-£7,754 per annum (under review). Further particulars from **Miss I. L. Breadmore, The University, Southampton SO9 5NH,** to whom applications should be made, giving details of date of birth, qualifications and experience and the names of three referees, by **9 February 1979.** Please quote Ref: 978/A/Nst.

WADHAM COLLEGE, OXFORD

Applications invited from persons under 40 for a one-year

Bowra Research Fellowship

(in any discipline) from October 1979. The Fellowship carries a small supplementary stipend only. Scholars on sabbatical leave may apply. Further particulars from **Senior Tutor.**

BRITISH INSTITUTE IN EASTERN AFRICA

Applications are invited from archaeologists for the post of

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Based on Nairobi. Candidate should preferably be post-doctoral and prepared to specialise in later prehistory.

Further particulars from:
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Poetry

AMBIT/CAMDEN Poetry Reading Thurs. 18 Jan. 8 p.m. Chalk Farm Library, Sharples Hall St, NW1. The poets are: Dannie Abse, Jim Burns, Sue Jackson. Tickets 30p.

AMBIT/CAMDEN Poetry Reading Thurs. 1 Feb. 8 p.m. Regent's Park Library, Compton Close, Robert St, NW1. The poets are: Adrian Henri, Alan Brownjohn, Harriet Rose. Tickets 30p.

Meetings

A EUROPEAN SOCIALIST MANIFESTO CONFERENCE

Saturday, 27 January organised by Young Fabians at Mothers' Union assembly hall, 24 Tufton St, Westminster, London, 10 a.m.-4.30 p.m.
PETER SHORE (Cabinet Minister), DAVID MARQUAND (former EEC chief), REG UNDERHILL (Labour Party), JOHN MILLS (Safeguards Committee), KEITH KYLE (BBC Panorama reporter), PIET DANKERT (Dutch Euro-MP), CARL WILMS-WRIGHT (ICFTU), MARTIN UPHAM (steelworkers' union), GEOFF HARRIS (EEC Socialist Group).
Cost: £1 Fabians, £2 non-members.
Details/reservation forms from Administrative Officer, Fabian Society, 11 Dartmouth Street, SW1H 9BN. Tel: 01-930 3077.

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON, Gower St, WC1E 6BT. Lunch Hour Lectures, 1.20 to 2. Admission free 23 Jan. 'Questions for Questionnaires' by Professor M. Stone; 25 Jan. 'Roman Emperors and Roman Frontiers' by Professor F. G. B. Millar.

'ROOTS' — Lubavitch weekend school at Lubavitch House. Discussions, Fabrengens. (Chassidic get-togethers), an opportunity to discover something more of the spiritual realities within Judaism today. Men 26-27 Jan., women 2-3 Feb. Registration fee £1 students, £2 non-students. Contact Zvi Telsner, Tali Loewenthal, Lubavitch House, 107-115 Stamford Hill, London N16 5RP. Tel: 01-800 0022.

JUSTICE FOR WOMEN — What does it mean in poor countries and the West? Ms Janaki Nair will draw on her experience in community education in India at Oxfam/Africa Centre meeting 6.30, Wed. 24 Jan. 38 King St, Covent Garden, WC2.

THEODOR HERZL SOCIETY and London University Lecture Course begins at 57 Eton Avenue, NW3, Tues. 23 Jan. 8.15 p.m. 'Israel — A Tale of 6 Cities' with Israeli lecturers, fortnightly. Guests welcome. Detailed leaflet tel. 435 7221.

SHAW SOCIETY, Fri. 26 Jan. Toni Block on 'Shaw—Atheist?'. Conway Hall, Red Lion Sq., WC1. Coffee 6.30. Lecture 7 p.m.

HOMEOPATHIC MEDICINE, talk by John Ainsworth. London Young Humanists, 13 Prince of Wales Terr., W8. Sun. 21 Jan. 7.30 p.m. 30p.

THE SHADOW PARLIAMENT CLUB, The Political Pundits' Debating Forum welcomes new members. 01-459 8225.

PERSONAL GROWTH through self discovery. Meetings 27 Whitcomb Street, WC2. Tel. 01-930 6011.

THEOSOPHY: S.a.e. for pamphlets, book list, programme of activities. Public Talk Sun. 21 Jan. 8 p.m. 'Fate and Freewill'. ULT, 62 Queen's Gardens, London W2.

Royal Commonwealth Society
INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF THE CHILD 1979
Joint Lecture series with Oxfam and Unicef
Thurs. 25 Jan. 1.15 - 2.15 p.m.
Rt Hon. Mrs Judith Hart MP, Minister for Overseas Development speaks on: **'The Child in Developing Societies'** at RCS, 18 Northumberland Avenue, London WC2.

Courses

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